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JOHN ARNOLD.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MATHEW PAXTON,"

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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JOHN ARNOLD.

CHAPTER I.

THE FACTORY.—JOHN'S INVENTIONS.

THE strike still continued; as intense as ever was the bitterness of feeling among the mechanics, though the number in the town of the self-made idle men had considerably diminished, and was continuing to lessen every week. The worst thing to such employers as had much work on hand was that, as yet, there was no great influx of strangers—therefore no increase of moment in the number of the workmen. Men had been brought from a distance, it is true,—in some cases at very considerable expense; but most frequently it came to pass that they had been bribed or frightened away again, and dependence could be placed

alone on those old workmen who had remained firm from the first, and whose families were in the town. These men—not always the best workmen, though as a rule they were the best conducted—enabled the masters to keep the works going; but even so, where the masters had contract-work on hand, which ought to be finished by a given time, they were put to an extreme disadvantage; and now that the holiday-time was past, they felt it was necessary to take some more decided step to obtain men. The men who had continued faithful had all along been exposed to the same disagreeables as at first; they were forced, day by day, to run the gauntlet of reproaches, threats, and most persuasive entreaties, and it would not have been wonderful if they had begun to waver in their allegiance, which perhaps was the case in some degree. The constant pressure, the sympathy with the suffering men, their acquaintances, which—though they thought them to be in the wrong—they could not help feeling, were likely enough to make them pause and hesitate.

The men on strike—such of them as still

remained in the town of Grasaig, and the number was considerable — were not improved in circumstances by this last month's enforced idleness. It is true that a good deal of money had been distributed among them — the contributions of the engineers and machinists in other places. But the trade, as a whole, was not then organised as it has been since; then each several branch might, or might not, have its separate society; but as a whole, they were by no means so united nor so powerful, for good or evil, as they have become since that period. Then there was a great number, a very large minority — if, indeed, it was a minority — of the older and more experienced men who did not favour strikes, and especially would not countenance such strikes as this one was. These were engineers who had not been bred as such originally — men who had been in the habit of putting their hands to all departments of machine-work, and who felt that the object contended for in this case struck full against themselves; so, therefore, with few exceptions, it was the younger workmen — bred up in the hot-beds of large engine

factories, and only fit to pass muster among the workers in such places—who favoured the cause. All this told against the men who were out of work, and diminished the amount of money that, for a good cause, would have poured into the treasury. Money so dispensed, even if equal in amount with the wages they had cast away, would never have done the same good as money fairly earned. The men had so much idle time, and so many cabals going on, and councils were held generally in public-houses, and they very probably suffered so much mental anguish that they not unfrequently sought a temporary oblivion, a momentary forgetfulness, and strove to keep their spirits up by pouring spirits down; and by these means also the weekly pittance was diminished. It would be a valuable fact for social philanthropists, the knowledge of how much tradesmen who are also publicans, who keep drinking-houses in full swing during such strikes as this, contribute to these strike-maintaining funds; and whether they, receiving with both hands the money of the deluded men, give anything more than the poorest me-

chanic to the general fund. So far as the present case is concerned, notwithstanding their profitable business, some of them were actually drawing daily pay, which, to say the very least, they needed less than the others — at a much higher rate too, as managers of the turn-out, than the poor deluded men were receiving.

Among the men famine had made its appearance; the weaker members of the various families were suffering already, and a number of people, the very old and the very young especially, dependent on those who had left the town, were in a very sad state of want. There was no Scottish Poor Law in those days, and what the Kirk Sessions of the various parishes could afford to give was so very little that it looked a mockery. In consequence, mendicancy had increased, petty thefts had greatly multiplied, and the state of matters was bad in the extreme. Our Scottish artisans are a self-respecting race, on the whole, and the suffering must have been dreadful before they would either make application for the parish dole or have recourse to open beggary; but there were

hundreds of others who suffered by the great cessation of labour, the unskilled men and their teeming families — for let who will be childless, the Irish labourer can generally boast of a plentiful stock of olive-branches around his table—who had no such delicacy, and then universally was the strike assigned as the cause of all the misery and distress. So bad was the state of things in Grasaig that the employers themselves even had set on foot subscriptions, set soup-kitchens a-going; and though they could not appear openly to offer work themselves, their money went to swell the amount which was expended in giving employment to the idle on the town's muir. In addition to all these distressing elements, another, more dreadful than any of them, was added—the dearth of provisions—so great that even the families of those who were well-employed had to stint themselves. There was little wonder, therefore, that Grasaig should be enveloped in gloom and suffering, as with a pall, when John Arnold and Edward Archbold returned.

“How are they at home this morning?” John asked, as he met Edward in the yard.

"Oh, very well; some of them as full of life as ever. I can tell you, John, I've just come through a roasting, the like of which I don't wish to meet again—Annie's been at me tooth and nail."

"Why, what have you been doing so very soon?" John said, laughing at Edward's rueful countenance.

"Nay, it is not what I have done, but what I have not, that brought her on my head. I can tell you I was glad to get away; she got so vicious. However, here we are once more—once more bound down, slaves to the bell for another year; and yet I don't regret at all being back—what say you, John?—though I never spent such another fortnight in my life."

"Truly, I am very glad to be at the bench again, and once more in harness. Pleasuring's all very well in its way, and for a time; but there's nothing like the work, after all."

"Ye may say that," said a Scotsman named Craigie, who was standing near, one of the steadiest men who had remained in the work, "new come aff a jaunt, as ye are; but if ye'd had yer nose at the grundstane

in the shop even on, and yer head pelted wi' stanes out bye ilka day, for the last three weeks, may be ye'd reckon pleasin' no sae bad, after a', for a gey bit, ony way."

"Oh, nobody'll deny that a week or two's good at a time, and the last fortnight's been about as pleasant a one as ever I spent; but work's the main thing, after all. But how have you been getting on, Craigie? Peaceable or not?"

"Betwixt and between—no sae bad as we war before yer gaed awa', but no near sae guid as we soud abeen. Anither row, like the big ane before ye gaed awa'd, toomed the wark."

"Have there been no changes at all, Craigie?" John asked.

"No to speak o'; they've been a wheen new hands putten on maist ilka week, but ye'll no find mony o' them to the fore the day, I reckon. What wi' ae thing and anither, they just dwindle awa' before the week ends, I canna tell how."

"But the men—they stand staunch, do they not?" John again asked.

"Ou, ay, they're geyan siccar; some o' them, ony way, are steive eneugh, but

there's ithers very shaky — and what's waur, naebody kens ought richt aboot it; but there's mair mischief brewin' in the wind, that'll ha'e to blaw itsel' out afore there be peace or ony quietness in the shop again."

"But, Craigie, what sort of mischief?" Edward asked. "I thought most of the men had gone away. John and I met with two of them in Northumberland."

"Ay, did ye? weel, that was strange enough. But the maist o' the men are no that far awa' that they couldna come back very easy, and there's a great lot o' men about the town yet; ye micht see their sentries as thick as ever about the street-end, as ye came in. And about the mischief that's brewin', there nobody can tell what it may or may na be; a' that's about it is the sough o't at a distance, like the sough o' wind amang the trees afore a storm o' rain, or the roar o' the waves on the shore, which the folk say in the Highlands bodes a gale o' wind."

"Why, your quite poetical, Craigie. So there is a muttering of mischief, is there? Well, a good hearty shower often lays the

wind as well as the dust, and a good brisk gale blows away the rain. Mayhap, a little spirt of mischief may bring this bad state of things to an end," John said.

"God grant it were a day auld, and nane o' us hurt, nor the waur o't, and the works a' gaun on full time again. But ye saw some o' our lads awa' south, did ye say?"

"Yes, two of them—Ramage and Renton," Edward answered.

"Twa nice hempies tae, and nae mistake about it. We can dae brawly without the like o' them here, I reckon. But whar were they? and whatna kind o' wark were they aboot?"

"They didn't seem over and above pleased with us," Edward answered, "and they spoke out loudly enough, too. We found them erecting a colliery-engine up on one of the wastes in Northumberland—they and a few Edinburgh men, and all much about the same, so far as the strike was concerned, I fancy. Had John not been better known in the country than they were, it might have gone very hard with us both, I can tell you; as it was, it ended in smoke only."

“To think o’ that now! Folk said they’d gaen to England; but we dinna ken muckle about ony place in England hereawa’ but Liverpool. There was mair tint at Sherriemuir than the loss o’ them twa is to Grasaig.”

“How do the foolish men get on?” Edward asked. “Are they not starved out yet, or starved in rather? God forgive me that I should try to joke or speak lightly of such misery as that.”

“There’s muckle distress amang them, doubtless,” was the answer of Craigie, “and there’ll be a hantle mair afore the spring’s played out. A wee hue o’ starvation wad dae no that ill for some o’ the gouks themsels; but it’s awfu’ to think o’ the puir harmless weans sufferin’. It maks an unco odds in a house the want o’ the weekly wage whar there’s, may be, half a dizzen mouths to fill—aye gaping like young robins in the nest for their crowdie. I pity them—no the fuils o’ men at a’.”

“Truly, it’s not the pleasantest thing to think about,” John said. “What a pity people don’t remember the like of these things in time—in this case that the men didn’t count the cost before leaving work.”

“Ay, just sae. We’re aye wise behint hand; and then folk aye think they’re sùre to be successfu’, whatever their cause may be, or o’ what kind soever it is. Ye’ll ha’e heard, doubtless, o’ the great meetins to petition about the dear bread; I kenna if I’m richt, though; ony way, it’s about the high prices, and the merchants keepin’ up the prices mair than they soud dae. Queer wark they ha’e had at some o’ them, by a’ account.”

“No, indeed,” John said; “this is the first time we have heard of them.”

“Weel, ye’ll ha’e a chance, in a nicht or twa there’s to be ane; if ye gang ye’ll hear and see something at it, may be, ye dinna expect. But I maun awa’ afore the foreman comes round. I’m weel pleased to see ye baith back again, lads; but—” and Craigie looked heedfully round—“dinna ye be mair free wi’ yersels at nichts than ye can help, and dinna mak nor mell muckle wi’ the folk about the shop e’en. Mind the owre word o’ the song,—

‘He had an eye, and he could heed
Hunter’s watch so narrowly.’

Be on the watch against ilka ane.”

And having said this most oracularly, Craigie departed. He was a very sagacious, plain old Scotsman, one of the pattern men of the work for firmness, steadiness, and good conduct, and a staunch teetotaler, which perhaps made him what he was. His words had greater weight with the young men than anything that could have been said by any other person in the shop.

It was needful that they should see Mr. Morton as soon as he came to the foundry, and till that time they busied themselves in preparing to make a new start, and in arranging the material for their machine. As yet, it was only a case of *disjecta membra*, and not many of these. So much the better, John thought; his new idea could be put in force without the loss of material or time, which would have been the case had it been farther advanced. Hardly a change would be necessary, and only the new parts would require to be made after the patterns he could furnish of cranks, or movements, or whatever names they are called, which he had invented. If the machine would work well it would be a great success; if not, the theory was at

least most ingenious, and might lead the way to better things hereafter. There would be an immense saving of labour, rather than material, in the construction—consequently of cost; and the machine, on the whole, would not only be better, cheaper, and more beautifully simple, but also of much greater power. Simplification was the end John ever had in view; and if this problem was a success in practice, it would be a great encouragement to him. As Edward and he pored over the drawings of the original machine, John drew through upon them with his pencil all the parts he proposed to dispense with, and then faintly sketched in those he intended to add to it. Edward was completely dumbfounded with amazement.

“When, in the name of fortune, did you find time to think of all these things?” he cried. “Before we left this you could not see your way to anything. When did you manage to work out the calculations for these?”

“Oh, I got the ideas at various times, places, and ways,” was his answer; “and then you were so full of the novelties of

country life, and running after so many country lassies, while I was at home busy. Why, look ye, this idea struck me as I sat listening to the sermon on Tuesday last—a strange time and place that, you'll fancy—but you mind the figure of the engine the preacher used—very bunglingly, we thought, no doubt—but by one word in that he set me a-thinking, and this is the result; the preacher would not be much pleased, perhaps, nor was it right, I dare say; but my mind flew away about it, and could not keep it back.”

“Indeed; but why did you not tell Satan to be off, as I have heard of a famous man doing, who got an idea in the same impertinent sort of way while at church. Little heed you'd pay to the sermon after that, I'll be bound.”

“Not much, truly; but, still, I've a fair idea of it, and of what followed too. This notion I wrought out afterwards; but what do you think about this plan, after all?”

“Very much; I do not fear but it will be a great success; but would not the substitution of something here make it more certain? something like this —” and Ed-

ward drew a line on the drawing, connecting two parts in a distinctly different way from either the original or John's improved machine.

"The very thing; I always saw that was the weak point. Capital! now it is a joint production; and if Mr. Morton approves, and finds my calculations correct, we'll soon prove whether we're to be reckoned among inventors or mere bunglers."

"I've heard that all men have an ambition to see themselves in print — all of a certain class, any way. I fancy we are just as fond of notoriety, if it should never go farther, and become fame. Let us go to Mr. Morton now, and see what he thinks of our ideas, and whether he'll put his imprimatur upon our handiwork. Come along; he'll be in the office now."

Mr. Morton was in the office, was very much pleased to see them both well and safe, and very soon — putting away the work he was engaged upon — was deep in considerations of, and calculations about, the projected improvement of an old, but in reality an entirely new, machine; for hardly anything but the general idea and

purpose was borrowed, and that was common to all machines. The skilful engineer saw the great value of the principle which John had laid hold of and sought to develop; and when told that most of the more dubious points had been already fashioned by John, he despatched a man with him for them; and then, going to the workshops, put various workmen to do what John required to be done. If successful, this machine might make their fortunes, and so the idea should be quickly carried out. Mr. Morton entered with a kind of chastened enthusiasm into John's ideas; and though inclined to shake his head at first at Edward's thought, before long came to perceive that it alone could make it perfect as a whole. Would it work steadily and well?—that was the question to be solved. Not very long before, a very great improvement had professedly been made on the engines of sea-going steamers. Engineers of the very highest fame had given it the sanction of their name and countenance; but though beautiful and simple, and working perfectly for a time as a model, and even as a full-grown engine,

it had not proved a success. The principle was good; but there was a screw loose somewhere, which nobody as yet had discovered. Would this do better in practice? was now the question with them; and to prove it, press on the work.

What John had done while in Northumberland saved much hard thinking, as well as no little amount of manual labour now; and his models, rough as they were, could serve in a great measure as gauges, and the various parts could be set about at once. And now, instead of Edward and himself pottering about over the little job, which they were so proud of a week or two ago, they had whole squads of men, of blacksmiths and moulders, and of the other branches, executing their orders, doing the work under their direction; and before the day was done, it began to be rumoured about the shop that Arnold had invented a new engine. Mr. Morton took care at once that the invention should be made secure, if it should turn out to be worth anything; so that in John, Edward, and, in conjunction with them, the master himself, the property should be invested.

It was with no little pleasure, it may be well imagined, that these friends left off work that night, after such a delightfully busy day. Everything seemed tinged with a golden hue, because their own minds were so agreeably upheld by hope for the future. But out of the work, when they emerged into the street, they felt again the gloom, the darkness, settle down, not on themselves, but on others: they could perceive the worse than folly of the foolish men, their wickedness, and the consequences of the strike, which already, ere they had been a day in the town, they could not help recognising. There were the men on picket, the spies and guards, at every access to the foundry. There were the mutterings of enmity and wrath as they passed homewards, and the forebodings of the tempest yet to burst forth, plainly legible in the aspect of these men. There were sadder tokens of the strike's operation still, in the groups of half-naked, well nigh whole-starved, children at the street corners, and in the frequent appeals they heard made to the charity of the passers-by. Alas! that men should ever, for the sake of some

phantom, abandon the 'reality'—that they should of their own deliberate will run the risk of such dreadful evils to themselves and families for the sake of such a very imaginary good to themselves, of downright cruel evil to others, as in this strike they had in view! To working men, to artisans and mechanics as a body, their worst foes are almost always those who are within their own ranks. It is quite right and most praiseworthy to resist oppression, and shake off tyranny; but does not in very many cases the greatest oppression come from themselves? If it is a crime in a master to oppress his workpeople—and no one denies it is—is it not a crime for workpeople to oppress their brethren? "Why judgest thou another man-servant; to his own master he standeth or falleth?" If we all acted a little more in this spirit, how much better a world would this soon become! Granted that every trade has many evils to be redressed; these are either common to the whole trade, or particular to one shop or town. If the former,—as those in this strike were said to be,—then surely a more patient, quiet, reasonable

way could be found to redress them than merely rushing at once into open collision with the employers. Nature does not deal in any such compendious ways in any of her operations, save those that are calamitous; and from Nature, or—to speak more reverently and more correctly—nature's God, men might learn that extreme and violent measures are sure to bring trouble and anguish in their train.

CHAPTER II.

MARION'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF GRASAIG.

WHILE the girls were away at their toilette, Mrs. Archbold entered the apartment, and put to flight right speedily all Frank Arnold's day-dreams.

"Ah, Mr. Frank," she said, "I did not know you were here, have you seen your sister since you came?"

"Yes; Miss Annie has promised to take her out to see the town, and I'm to have the honour of escorting them. I am waiting now till they get ready."

"How very careless of Annie not to tell me you were here. Do you really mean to go away to-night?"

"Indeed I must, I even grudged the time I spent at home, and felt eager to get into the harness again."

"You are going to give up the engineering; I think I heard your brother say so."

I don't wonder at it. Surely the wonder rather is that sensible people stay in it, when they are exposed to such crises as this present one."

Frank smiled. "I'm afraid such affairs as this strike would have rather the contrary effect upon me, were I in this place. But it has been my purpose for a long time, as soon as I could see my way clear, to get out of the business. Yet I fancy I have so much dourness in my nature, that a crisis like this one would only fix me the more strongly, if I had not otherwise resolved."

"But surely you allow that it is both a difficult and dangerous state of affairs; I most heartily wish that your brother and my son were both well out of it, at present at least."

"It is no less than that. Like all other things it will come to an end, and before it be long I feel convinced. I never heard of a strike where the men could stay out long, and when they do go back, they are generally glad to accept almost any terms. I don't fancy this one will be an exception, nor that it will last much longer now."

"I sincerely hope it will not, but until it ends, I shall be miserable about both the lads. While they were away we lived in some measure of peace and quiet, and our notion was that the disturbances would be over before they came back, but now it seems the men are just as obstinate as ever."

"It was, perhaps, rather soon to look for a change so decided; they have not had time to feel the hopelessness of their position as yet; but they'll feel it more and more severely every day now."

"Perhaps so, I don't wish to say anything about the men; but one can't help wondering that the decent respectable men, both your brother John and my son tell me of, should have been led astray, and induced to take part in such—I cannot help thinking it—a foolish thing."

"It is passing strange, Ma'am, but once committed it is not easy to draw back, and though their ideas seem transparently fallacious and foolish to most dispassionate people, they appear the very perfection of truth and right to themselves, and at any rate are held most conscientiously by them, that I can vouch for."

"I have no doubt of that. One would not expect men to suffer such voluntary hardships unless they had faith in the principle as being good at bottom."

"And they are suffering. The men made a great mistake in their time of taking action. The country is not in the most prosperous state, and every trade is languishing more or less, especially their own; then provisions are dreadfully dear; and though for a time they may prevent the idle men of other towns coming here and taking employment, they will not be able to do so for long, that must soon end. So either they must themselves return, or the strangers will flow in and fill their old places."

"You seem to have thought a great deal about these things, Mr. Frank." Mrs. Archbold was greatly surprised, as well at the language and ease with which he expressed himself, as at the thorough acquaintance he showed he possessed of the subject.

"I have a little, Ma'am, and discussed them often with a friend in Liverpool. I think it is a great pity that the men can't

devise some other means of improving their position but by strikes, which always fail. I fancy that a calm, earnest representation of their grievances, and steadily keeping them before the employers, and having them discussed as dispassionately as possible, would be much, and really do much better for both."

"Certainly, but dispassionate? I fear any discussion of that nature and between masters and men could hardly be."

"Hardly at present. The men look on the masters as natural enemies. Indeed, by far the worst feature in all these strikes is that the feeling of animosity does not cease with the end of them, but is perpetuated, and the line between the classes of employer and employed is drawn more broadly than before. Those who may live twenty years hence will see the effects of this contest strong in Grasaig."

"It may be so, yet many marvellous changes come to pass in twenty years. I would that there was even a semblance of peace now, and the people at work again, with or without their demands having been granted."

"It would be a great blessing to all parties. I know that the misery endured must be intense in many places where it is not seen and hardly suspected. Those who make the greatest outcry, and are most demonstrative, are not always the greatest sufferers, but, if we may judge from the placards on the walls, and from the bands of poor children on the streets, there must be a great deal of distress even now. The strike will be blamed for it all, though only an insignificant fraction of the engineers openly complain or seek help."

"Yes, I can see that, and so the employers have more odium thrown upon them. It makes one's heart bleed to think of these silent sufferers; they are far more to be pitied than those who rush out to the streets to make their necessities known."

"There is another effect of the strike which people don't look at, or think about, as they should do; that is, the moral demoralisation of the men, the evil habits they acquire, or which are encouraged during its course. I should not perhaps speak,—for people call me prejudiced, and



a person of one idea, because I am an abstainer from intoxicating drink—but it is this I specially mean, that many of the men acquire or grow confirmed in habits of drinking during such idlenesses as this one, who would be in a great measure safe while working, and these habits stick to them, and grow so powerful, that when they return to their employment again, they are sure to lose caste, and very many of them to become moral wrecks altogether.”

“But how do they get drink without money? Where does the money come from for such purposes! You quite amaze me, Mr. Frank.”

“I think I am correct though,” Frank answered. “Almost all their committee and other meetings are held in public-houses—that is a certain sign that there must be drink consumed. Then the money, greater or less, which they may get is also distributed in such places, and whatever it may be, and how greatly soever it be needed at home, some of it is certain to be spent in the place where it is paid. I have noticed idle men a hundred times, and however they may do for food or clothing,

I am sure they somehow could get drink, in what way or by what mean and miserable or dishonest shifts it is not so easy to tell, but I've noticed the fact, strange as it is, both in Newcastle and Liverpool."

"It is strange and startling, and if it is true of these engineers, is of itself a very powerful reason for desiring that this contest should come to an end. But here are the girls. Of course you come back with them. At what hour will you have to go away to-night."

"At eight o'clock I believe, but it may be later."

"Frank thought, as he rose to go out with the girls, that he had seldom seen two fairer specimens of the sex, and such a beautiful contrast as they formed too, equally beautiful, but of such a very different type of beauty, so markedly distinct in its character. The black hair and dark flashing eyes of Annie, and her aristocratic face and air, contrasted finely with the softer, milder sweetness of Marion's deep blue eyes, fair hair, and gentle innocent face. As was to be expected there was a marked difference in dress also — Annie more stylish



though very quiet, almost quieter than usual, perhaps on account of Marion, whose dress though good and handsome, yet told its country origin not obscurely. But for all that, the heavier shawl, the stouter boots, and less artistic bonnet, Marion Arnold's was one of those countenances which people would like to look on again, not to criticise her dress, but to admire her handsome person, and to dream about her sweet face. Annie had no cause to be ashamed of the country girl, and her mother looked on both with approval, and passed her hands with admiration over Marion's soft thick plaid, smoothing out its folds, and making them fall more gracefully. Mrs. Archbold treated Marion quite as her mother might have done, and Marion's heart warmed to her almost more for these little caressing acts than for things more tangible.

"You may think yourself fortunate, and very highly favoured, Mr. Frank," Annie Archbold said, "to be permitted to squire two such girls as we are. Don't you think so, mother? It's not every day he has such a chance, I'm sure."

"Hush, dear!" Mrs. Archbold answered. "See, you make him blush. How do you know whom he may squire every day when he is in Liverpool? Never mind Annie, Mr. Frank."

"Yes, how do any of us know," Marion said, smiling at Frank's confusion. "I would not say, but there may be one in Liverpool, perhaps, whom he might have the bad taste to prefer to us both who are here present."

"Perhaps," Frank answered, "but it isn't fair, Miss Annie; remember the last time I went out with you,—it wasn't through the day truly, but if it had been nobody would have envied me, driven as I was from pillar to post, and from post to pillar. Indeed, a kind of something like Mohammed's coffin, hanging between two couples, each desirous of shaking me off, and yet could not, for very shame do it; now I shall have you both all to myself, but I'll be generous."

Annie's face flushed for an instant, cheeks and brow and neck in one sudden fiery glow. She remembered that night quite well, and how she had felt, but had little

expected that Frank would turn the tables so adroitly upon her. However, Annie Archbold was by no means the person to be put down by any man who ever wore a beard, and so she quickly answered:—

“ Oh, yes, I remember how miserable you looked; but it’s we that will be generous and favour you, for the present at least. Now, squire of dames, get ready—but stop—has he ever told you what said young lady in the south is like—has he Marion, dear?”

“ No, I don’t remember that he has; but let him alone, poor fellow, perhaps he’ll take heart of grace and tell us as we go along.”

Marion’s beautiful little watch had already in part told something of Frank’s story to Annie. Frank was amazed to hear Marion speaking so boldly, and when he thought of the special cause which had induced John and himself to urge her coming here for a time, he rejoiced to see something like a gleam of her old cheerful light-heartedness coming back. Indeed the total want of suitable companions had contributed to increase Marion’s melancholy in no slight degree, and such a friend as Annie was most likely to rouse her again thoroughly.

They set out through the best streets in the town, Marion soon having an opportunity of dropping her letter into the post-office as they went along. To Annie Archbold and Frank there was nothing very noteworthy in these streets; to Marion all was novel, all was wonderful; her one visit to Newcastle, a year or two before, had only confused her, and had hardly left a trace on her memory save one of wonder. Annie had been accustomed to London, its crowded streets and lines of shops; Frank to those of Liverpool, and they both passed along carelessly, and with indifference; but the simple country girl looked on everything with interest and admiration: the lofty houses, the churches, the handsome shops, their windows decked out in all the tempting bravery and display the shopmen could devise to tempt purchasers. Marion would have liked to stop at every one, to examine and admire. Annie, however, — perhaps she liked the work herself — took her into one or two special ladies' shops, where Frank, besides having to undergo the misery of waiting — a useless encumbrance on the pleasure of the two — was

compelled to draw his purse, and purchase indispensable nothings for his sister, and at the library was loaded with Ivanhoe, to be carried home for Marion's delectation. In these shops Marion did not know which to admire most, the greatness of the stock, or the extreme politeness and very *empresé* manners of the shopmen, who presented such a contrast, in their rapid, quiet movements, and low-toned voices, to the rough, loud, honest, heavy-headed, slow-moving Gideon of Framlington, whose shop was the wonder and delight of those parts, and really did an amount of business in their particular line, which would have made the Grasaig drapers stare. Smile they might, and doubtless would, at his invariable answer to every question, "Plenty," whether the question was, had he the finest quality of silk, or satin, or velvet? Train oil, pins, or sheet-anchors, "plenty" was certain to be the reply, but they would not have smiled had they seen his balance sheet after the Martinmas term, when his accounts had come in. Marion did not think of these things, it was the contrast as she saw it, and wherever she went she found herself continually doing the same.

They went down along the Shore Parade, John's favourite walk. The weather—which in Northumberland had been cold and frosty, with the country covered up with snow—had been mild and open here, so that they could enjoy the walk along the beach, without feeling the cold. What could Marion say to this beautiful Clyde? The beach at Bamborough was as fine, the sands more pure,—mud and slough reigned paramount upon the shingle and rocks here—but there the only *vestigia* of vessels that could be seen, were most frequently mouldering keels and shattered timbers of ships cast away amid the Farne Islands and now defiling the pure white sand with decaying vegetable matter. True, these islands looked picturesque, and behind was seen the illimitable sea, while here there was only a narrow frith, with hills beyond, and, as Marion could clearly see, with long lines of white houses climbing up the nearer hill-sides. But then this narrow sea was covered with ships. A huge vessel, with a long ribbon as it seemed flying from her masthead, and two strips of white and black along her side, was pointed out

as a two-decked man-of-war, and as they stood looking, to Marion's great terror, one, two, three jets of flame burst out from the side, followed, as it seemed, by volumes of smoke much larger than the vessel, hiding her from view, and accompanied a moment or two after by three cracking roars of cannon blending into one. Marion put her hands to her ears and wished to leave the exposed walk at once, to get out of danger, and by Annie's raillery and assurance alone, that they ran no risk, could she be induced to stay, greatly as she had been fascinated by the sight. Then there were other ships lying at anchor, outward or inward bound, with wealthy cargoes, to or from the ends of the earth, and steamers were flying hither and thither, sometimes with long strings of small vessels behind them, sometimes two of them harnessed to an ocean leviathan, which they were ruthlessly dragging to port or out to sea. And ever and anon there was a rush and surge and swell in the quiet water as some long, swift passenger steamer shot rapidly up or down. All was life and motion on the water — a living picture set in a frame



of living rock, so to speak. The river hemmed in by hills on either hand with the course of the beautiful lochs dimly traceable, stretching far away within the opposite hills. The grand mountains of Argyle, the clear busy waters of the frith! Here were indeed the majestic works of God, and the mightiest works of man, combined in one and the same fair scene.

Marion of course must have a nearer view of the vessels, so they went to the harbours, where she saw great ships in the most unpicturesque and unpoetic of all states they can be in, that of being laden and unladen, being dismantled or refitted. A vessel stricken by a tempest, with sails rent and torn, masts shivered and broken, boats stove and bulwarks swept away, forms a fine poetical image, or is thought to do so by every one but the merchants who have the damage to repair, or the poor seamen who have suffered the violence of the gale, but a vessel in such a prosaic attitude as that of lying in a dry dock, under the hands of the shipwrights, is as flat and dead as a pair of old shoes in the hands of a cobbler. Marion Arnold wondered at, but

did not admire those huge hulks. It was something very astonishing to see vessel after vessel discharging sugar and timber. Quite enough to amaze one much more versed in the world than she was, to think what this town—not so very large after all—could do with it all. But Marion's country breeding showed itself more in the attention she paid to the horses and the queer-looking vehicles which abounded about the wharves,—they were like nothing she had ever seen before, and she pointed out both the car and the cattle to her brother Frank in wonder.

The engine factory where John and Edward were then detailing their ideas to Mr. Morton was passed, and pointed out, and so were the men, haggard and forlorn like, who watched its gates on behalf of their neighbours out on strike. Marion shuddered as she thought she discerned a kind of wolfish glare in the hollow eyes of some men they saw loitering about, who, Frank declared, were engineers. It was sad even to her inexperienced eyes to see and to think upon the misery they had brought upon themselves, and which their

obstinacy was still keeping firm, a dead weight upon their energies.

Much more fatigued than she would have been by a much longer walk in the country, Marion accompanied Annie home again, leaving Frank to follow after he had seen John. Edward might have triumphed to-day had he seen Marion Arnold, foot-sore and weary, walking over the hard stones and the uneven causeway, which was very severe and trying to one accustomed to the soft country roads or field paths of Northumberland.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN AND ANNIE.

THE evening found the young people gathered round Mrs. Archbold's tea-table; John and Edward, in the highest spirits, relating the probabilities of the successful accomplishment of their plans. Of course they might as well have read a chapter in Hebrew to the ladies, as have tried to explain affairs to them; but yet they could understand sufficiently to know that already John was an inventor, whether he should turn out a successful one yet remained to be proved.

Frank's going away kept them all unsettled, and prevented John from enjoying the pleasure he was looking for so eagerly, of a *tête-à-tête* with Annie Archbold. Perhaps he could make love with the eyes, certainly he could listen eagerly to her

voice, and pay her the most delicate attention; but these were cold and dull ways of wooing, and cold and dull pleasures, when compared with the rapture of finding her hand resting on his arm, nestled snugly next his heart, under the warm plaid, and John almost wished Frank well away, that he might once more realise the delight of a long walk with Annie as of old; so selfish does this peculiar state of mind and feeling make people. Annie was in high spirits too, and her face glowed, and her eyes sparkled with delight, as Edward told what Mr. Morton had said and done, and ever and anon she could not resist the temptation of throwing joyous glances at John, who felt rather ashamed of Edward's eulogies, and attempted more than once to cut them short. John was hardly so much afraid to meet the glance of Annie's eyes now, and his own spoke a language which she could very fairly translate. On the whole, therefore, they were a happy party. Marion, with less idea of the worth of a discovery or invention in the mechanical arts, so far as mere money or even fame was concerned, could yet appreciate praises



when ascribed to her brother, and Frank, knowing well what was in John, was therefore less surprised at the welcome news. Mrs. Archbold neither sought nor attempted to moderate the enthusiasm of the young people — perhaps she perceived to what object John's attentions tended; and truly the proposals of a young rising engineer, a successful inventor, promised something greatly better than she could have fancied a few weeks ago, when she almost hesitated about sanctioning the intimacy between her son and him. Besides, like her daughter, she thought enthusiasm by no means a bad thing in a young man, when joined with sterling steadiness and perseverance, and certainly John Arnold seemed to possess the latter, if any man ever did.

The evening passed rapidly away, and the time came when Frank must depart. Partings are always more or less painful. Perhaps this parting was less so than ever before with the Arnolds. Frank was going away, not as before to an unknown place, where he had no friends, but to join those who were most anxious to make him welcome; one among them even counting the

hours till he should arrive, and take possession of the pretty chamber she had seen so carefully prepared. Frank himself was to the full as eager to be there, to begin his new duties, and perhaps—though he said nothing about that—to resume his old ones, and sigh at the feet of sweet Mary Cuthbert. John was much in the same predicament, but as it seemed much nearer success. Frank had long years of probation to pass through, before he could even be fitted or permitted to enter himself as a candidate for the new race, whereas John's prospects were culminating; they seemed drawing nearer to a successful realisation day by day, and it appeared just then as if, with a flowing sheet and a steady breeze, he was about to enter the harbour safely, and be gratified with success both in his love and his ambition. Marion was happy, and this sojourn in a strange place and intercourse with new friends most likely to do her good, and thus all in high hope and heart, Frank Arnold was ready to depart.

All of the young people went with him to the steamboat quay to see him embark.



Then, when the brave steamer had departed, they proceeded leisurely homewards. John had now his desire gratified. Annie Archbold was, so to speak, under his wing, while Edward took charge of Marion. The order of things was now reversed, it was no longer Annie that was in the way, but Edward, and though he was nothing loath — on the contrary was greatly delighted to be with the sweet girl — yet she spoke to him so calmly, and as yet looked him in the face so clearly and composedly, as only her brother's friend, and nothing more to her, that he almost inclined to become fretful and impatient. His impulsive nature ever would hurry him to extremities. Besides, Maggie Barnard rose before him accusingly; what if he should have the mortification of seeing her under the convoy of the gallant sailor — could that story be an invention of Annie's to tease him, or a reality, proving that he was really forgotten? or if he should see her bearing down upon him, claiming her old place, which Marion all unconsciously now occupied. Edward hardly fancied that Maggie and Marion would have begun to pull caps

about him, but his position would assuredly be an awkward one, should they happen to meet.

"So you are going to do great things, John," Annie said when they had fallen into their old order, with a voice that slightly trembled as she pronounced the name for the first time in his own presence, "and likely to be successful. I cannot tell you how pleased I am to hear it."

"Thank you very much, I hope we shall be—for the plan is quite as much Edward's as mine—the complete idea any way. I feel sure of success in the end, perhaps not certain at first, but in the long run. First trials and attempts, even if failures, are, I fancy, often about as useful to one as success, for they prove in what our calculations are right, and in what wrong."

"Oh, don't say anything of Ned, he has the grace to keep quiet himself, and he can sing his own praises very well. He make calculations! not he, it's your work, I feel quite sure of that, John."

"Perhaps the calculations are, but a very essential idea is his. Thank you again, Miss Annie, I like to hear my own name



from your lips more than I can tell you."

John's voice grew soft and low as he spoke the last sentence confusedly.

"You must have had a fine time with Ned while away. I believe he'll never forget Northumberland. It isn't much I can get him to say as yet, and his letters were such mere scraps, overflowing indeed with your mother's kindness to him, that one does not know what you were about really while away."

"Truly I don't think it would be difficult to tell. Of course what was every day and commonplace to us was quite novel and strange to him, and he seemed to enjoy himself very much. Oh! it was a great pity, dead season of the year as it was, but that you could have gone also, Miss Annie. I should have enjoyed the jaunt much more, I know."

Annie did not answer for a few minutes. John was disposed to become more tender and pathetic than usual, and his voice, it appeared, was apt to sink into a lower tone than common, too, to-night.

"What do you think of Marion, Miss

Annie?" John asked after a pause of some duration.

"A very great deal. She's the sweetest girl I ever saw. You needn't depreciate country-bred girls again, John, to me, for she makes me ashamed of myself in things common to us both. She was so pleased to-day with the shops and what she saw in the town."

"Ah! I dare say that a town to her is a greater marvel than Outchester or the country life would be to you, Miss Annie."

"Now, then, let there be fair play between us; no more Misses if you please; I—as yet any way, as our washerwoman says very expressively, if very vulgarly—miss much more than I hit; drop it, if you please, John."

"Truly I will, with more pleasure I never did anything, Annie. But Marion, dear lassie, so sweet, so young, and so innocent, has already had her own trials—if they can really be called such—to endure. I should very much like, Annie, if you could get her to tell them to you. I feel sure it would be such a great relief and



comfort to her, to have some one in whom she could confide."

"Oh! I have an idea already; her confidence will come by and by, all in good time. But, John, you're just like all the men, you expect too much, at least in this respect, in so short a time."

"No, I didn't expect you would know her trouble already, but that I should like much that you did know it, and could counsel her. I knew you would do that. Like a character in one of Shakspeare's plays, Malvolio, I think, she was threatened with

'Having greatness thrust upon her.'

The young minister would fain have her as his wife now that his ordination and settlement are over."

"So I managed to guess from Ned's notes and Marion's half confidences this morning. But is he not a suitable person, John? I fancied that you all thought a great deal of him?"

"The old people think he is, Marion doesn't; and you know girls like her are not led by the same cold reason of worldly wisdom as rules the elders."

"No, they are not; and so much the better, I think. So much the better that there is something above the world and the world's wealth that doesn't follow the cold reasonings of interest, that looks not to its own things, but also to the things of another."

Annie spoke lowly, but firmly and earnestly, and John felt her hand tremble on his arm, and a quiver passed through his own frame, as if symptomatic of the thoughts which filled her heart.

"Yes," he answered gravely; "I say thank God that there is something better in our natures than mere worldly wisdom. But how kind and tender soever one's friends may be, they often look to what a man is worth in world's gear and outward station more than to what he is to the person specially concerned. Our people are no exception to this rule. Mr. Johnson is not rich, most likely never will be so rich, as many of the young farmers around them; but then his position is reckoned so much higher."

"If wealth is to outbalance worth, John, I fancy it would be better to return to the

old way, the Eastern way, and sell us women to the highest bidder. I believe we should just be as happy in that case as when we are disposed of to the richest or the most suitable suitor that our friends approve of, and we don't."

"Ah! Annie, such a fate must be hard enough, but never will be yours, I feel persuaded, nor Marion's either; but it was very hard for the innocent lassie to bear up when she saw plainly which way the old people inclined. Then the whole country side joined their names together, which made it still more unpleasant. She will tell you herself wherefore she would not listen to either the minister or her parents."

"Edward seems in a fair way too, I fancy. What do you think, John, would he have a better chance than the young minister?"

"I fear not, but I'm not afraid of him; he is well protected otherwise, is he not, Annie?"

"I should not like to say confidently that he is. Would you believe it, he seems to have forgotten Maggie Barnard altogether, and if he had a chance I would

neither wonder at that, nor blame him very much, for certainly Maggie did show a little more temper and selfishness than I expected just before you went away."

"Yes, she seemed to think more of her own pleasure than either Edward's personal safety or well-being. But yet I hope Edward will keep heart-whole in regard to Marion. I would never forgive myself, if I could think her coming here would raise hopes in his heart only to be crushed."

"Oh! never fear for Ned, I'll take care of him. Though if there was a chance, I would favour him, John, as much as I possibly could, I should so like to have Marion for a sister——"

Annie stopped abruptly, she had not thought of the construction that the last words would bear, and thus, as it flashed into her mind, her face burned as if with fire. For an instant John did not notice how the words could be understood, his thoughts, full of Marion, were far away. Annie's pause brought him to himself, and he felt his heart beat quickly, and something prompting him to ask at once that Annie should indeed become so, only in

another way than the one she meant. Very confused both of them were, and they would very likely have come to some more full explanation than John's earnest and heartfelt —

“Oh, that you would! Oh, Annie, dear Annie, that you would become her sister ——”

But what more he would have said was cut short, to his great sorrow, by Marion herself. Edward and Marion had halted till the laggards should come up, that they might all go in together. But Annie Archbold still kept fast hold of John's arm, and did not refuse either to receive or return the earnest caressing pressure of the hand, which found hers under the plaid; and though a little abashed at first by her hasty speech, she was not at all cast down by what had followed. When they entered the house, they found Edward's old flame sitting with Mrs. Archbold, to Edward's no small discomfort. He looked round jealously, as if to make sure that no naval hero was lurking about the room. Annie led Marion away to her own room, as soon as she had saluted the visitor, only pausing

for an instant as she passed the young men, and giving John a conscious half laughing, half shame-faced look, she repeated

“It is best to be off wi’ the auld love
Before ye be on wi’ the new.”

Maggie was not over and above gracious, and her eyes followed Marion out of the room. She eagerly scanned her sweet face and handsome figure as she returned. This was an opponent, indeed, whom she well might fear, if there ever should be rivalry between them. There was a constraint and coldness in Maggie’s manner, which perhaps Edward ought to have expected, but which Annie had given no cause for, and felt very much inclined to resent, and only refrained for Marion’s sake. After a while the visitor rose to depart, and Edward, with a most rueful countenance, prepared to accompany her, even though she seemed desirous to decline the escort, and that not very graciously either. John understood by his private signals that Edward wished him to go along with them, but he took his own instructions from

Annie's telegraph, and stayed behind, and so Edward was compelled to go alone, and, will he, nill he, to endure whatever reproaches his former liege lady might think he deserved at her hands.

CHAPTER IV.

STATE OF THE POPULATION OF GRASAIG.

AFTER a day or two John succeeded in getting lodgings more suitable for him now that Marion was with him, and had her installed therein. But though she ceased to reside with the Archbolds in name, she was really far more there than at home. The two girls were almost inseparable, and John, rejoicing at it on his sister's account, was no less pleased on his own, as he thus had a nightly excuse for passing an hour or two beside Annie. Either she was with Marion, or Marion with her. It certainly interfered considerably with his work at night, there was little doubt of that; but then he was busy every day and all day long, carrying out his first great idea, and therefore could rest at night for a little, and though so plea-

santly occupied for a part of each evening, he was still carefully verifying his calculations, and strenuously trying to deserve success. Though hardly at all in doubt as to Annie's feelings, he as yet had never alluded farther to the very interesting subject which had been interrupted so unceremoniously on the night Frank left Grasaig. John was desirous of having his invention proved, its success demonstrated, before he ventured broadly on the subject again, and though they had many pleasant walks together, and their conversation was daily becoming more tender and confidential, neither cared just yet to go back to that scene. Perhaps—most likely indeed—Annie perceived or guessed the cause of John's silence; perhaps she might be vexed at it—John at least saw nothing like that in her manner; on the contrary, they seemed drawn to each other more closely with each succeeding day.

Edward was most industriously playing the part of the moth about a candle, and the probability seemed most certain that his wings would be scorched thoroughly. With regard to his first interview with

Maggie Barnard, he kept a close silence, but it appeared that she had not yet given him up as faithless and forsworn. Maggie still continued to come frequently to Mrs. Archbold's, and was studiously polite to Marion, and at first even inclined to be condescending, which Annie, however, speedily checked and stopped, and Marion, in her innocence, not perceiving, made of none effect; but all the long, pleasant walks of the old time, all the dutiful journeys which Edward used to make to escort her, had come to an end, or at least occurred so very rarely, that you could hardly believe that he had ever been so devoted. The state of the town afforded a good reason for this last change, however, and none of the young people went out nearly so much or so freely as before; but so far as Edward Archbold was concerned, Marion Arnold's fair face and mild blue eyes had much greater force than any danger from the turn-out men.

In London a week of frost throws tens of thousands into a state of the greatest destitution, and converts our police courts, police magistrates, and policemen into a



gigantic machinery for outdoor relief. All honour and praise to those excellent magistrates for the ready, willing, and hearty kindness with which they take upon themselves duties so onerous and novel, as well as painful, and so ably perform them! All praise be rendered, too, to those hosts of benefactors who in such circumstances cause the poor-boxes to overflow, and give the power to mitigate suffering! In a town like Grasaig, and among a people such as the engineers, a longer time was required to bring them down to such a sad condition; besides, the habits of the Scottish people then — however they may be changed for the worse now, as many say is the case since the introduction of the Poor-law — led them rather to suffer in silence than openly to bring forth their distress before the world and clamour for aid. But everything was against the poor just then,—there was the almost total cessation of labour in these mighty works which a little while ago had employed so many thousands where now there were not hundreds; there was dulness in every department of labour

throughout the country, which prevented the absorption of the idle men elsewhere; there was the severe winter weather adding to the numbers out of work, all connected with open air employments, and then, to crown all, there was a dearth of food. Any of these causes in operation would have been bad enough, but all combined made Grasaig become like a town in mourning. Very soon the distress spread, and began to tell on other classes besides those of the workmen; and first here, and then there, shops were seen to close. The little general shop in this street to-day, the butcher's in the other to-morrow, and a grocer or baker in a third the following day, and thus, credit being cut off, the pressure was made to fall more heavily upon the men, till it seemed as if the very atmosphere of the town was an atmosphere of suffering.

Then the insane notion spread abroad, that the merchants and retail dealers had combined to keep up the price of provisions, and some even hinted that the engineering firms had some hand in the plot, in order to force the men back to



their employment the more speedily. It is strange what fallacies and absurdities even sensible men will swallow, if their interests or passions are appealed to with proper art. Yes, it is amazing that men otherwise, and at other times, cool, shrewd and sagacious will devour any nostrum, and follow any figment, how ridiculous soever it may be, if it only comes to them in the seductive guise of being for their personal advantage or gratification. And there were plenty of those nostrums current at that time, political and social and politico-social. One cried the charter, and nothing but the charter, was the cure, the infallible remedy. Another that men should return to the law of nature, as he forsooth interpreted it, and live henceforth in harmonies and phalanges, in squares and circles, and should have all things in common. Another cried, down with the Corn Laws, and with better reason and greater success, if not with better arguments, than the Chartists. All these party cries could be heard in Grasaig, all these parties, but especially the two first, raised their heads, amid the troubled masses of the suffering

people. But it was the economic question, the one which appealed most strongly to purse and stomach, the small loaf, the dear meal, which had greatest weight, and commanded most attention. Forty year earlier these artisans and labourers would have been in revolt against the tyrannic extortions of the meal-mongers and forestallers, and the Yeomanry would have been called out to flash their swords before the eyes of the hungry people, and drive them away from the bakers' shops, if they did not proceed to greater extremities. But now, whether from the greater intelligence of the people, the greater respect for the law, or greater fear of the judge, they only met and grumbled, and spoke seditious speeches, mostly very foolish ones. The great mass of the people were thoroughly sound at heart, for all their grumbling, and though hunger is quite as powerful as tyranny, and may drive even a wise man mad, these people were not driven to that extremity yet. In all such troublous times there are always some men under the surface, under the cloak of the general suffering and



distress, ready enough to seize the opportunity to commit crime for their own personal advantage. A desolating plague finds or creates harpies, who thrive by the sufferings or death of its victims, who will without the least scruple hasten the exit of a sufferer from the world, that they may pillage his goods, which would be at their mercy quite as surely did they wait only an hour or two longer. And in the troubled state of Grasaig there were many such individuals to be found, who thought, under the shelter of so many idle and starving men, to do deeds of which the vast majority disapproved.

John and Edward went one night to a meeting of the inhabitants of the town. It was held in an old church, which, being in a low and spiritually very necessitous part of the town, had, of course, been deserted by the minister and congregation for one in a more fashionable neighbourhood, after the usual custom in such cases, leaving the inhabitants around to sink farther down into the mire, or to struggle out of it as they could by their own efforts. This church was near the harbour, and pre-

sented a strange, even an appalling scene to them when they entered. Contrary to the usual nature of such meetings, it was composed almost entirely of working men out of work, many suffering the extremity of misery and hunger. With haggard, unshaven and pallid faces these men — once the pride of the town — now appeared mixed up with a large proportion of “roughs,” with whom in their better days they would have hesitated to associate. But hunger, the great leveller, made them feel on this occasion alike, and the skilled artisan and unskilled lumper stood forth alike in the same gaunt livery. The speakers were of the same class. Usually men of a little better station, though perhaps of no better qualifications, save the possession of greater confidence in themselves, can be easily found to preside and speak at meetings like this; and they are all the better liked if they bulk a little larger in the world’s eye than the working men do. But to-night, chairman, speakers, and audience were of the same class, and wore the same garb of woe. The speeches were, at one time, fierce and fiery, and again the speakers, often



with moving pathos, depicted the state into which themselves and families had fallen, swaying the audience as with a mighty wind; and then, as the masters were denounced with fiery vehemence, or the merchants and traders — whom they accused of raising food to a factitious and exorbitant price in order to prey upon their sufferings — with a ferocity and hatred which made the young men shudder, the audience applauded to the echo. The arguments by which they professed to prove such a conspiracy, and their denunciations of the conspirators, were based altogether on the most groundless assumptions: — there was really no conspiracy among the dealers to oppress them, but they fully believed there was. The turn-outs in that meeting did not see that they themselves were far more really plotters; that they themselves had conspired *de facto* to coerce, to oppress the employers of their labour, to trample on and drive out of work many men as deserving as themselves, and that they only suffered now because the justness of the masters and the firmness of the non-society men prevented them from yielding.

It is wonderful how personal considerations disturb one's views of things. That which, if it really did exist among the shopkeepers, they would reckon a foul or devilish plot against the working men, in the working men themselves, as against their own brethren, was the very perfection of what was just and right. Suppose both were so engaged, the one party combining to raise the price of goods, which working men bought, the other to force up the wages of the worker, and consequently the price of the commodity they manufactured, in what did their plotting differ? Each was striving to sell at the dearest rate what they had for sale, and no man could say they did wrong in so doing. But these workers demanded far more than that—they demanded practically that the worst article any one of them had should fetch the same price as the best of some other man, when they stood out for the abolition of piece-work, and a uniform rate of wages—just as surely as if they were themselves compelled to pay as high a price for a damaged article of food as they did for one really

sound, and were compelled to buy the bad in addition.

It was with sad hearts that John and Edward left the meeting, and walked away up the streets; they paid little attention to the scowling looks which a few men about the door of the place cast upon them as they passed by. The atmosphere of the old chapel was to them both quite stifling and they were glad to hurry out into the purer air to breathe more freely. The moral atmosphere was well nigh as stifling and as painful for them to breathe, and the dreadful stories of the suffering which existed, which they had heard, yet rung in their hearts as they walked homewards.

Annie was with Marion, and when they had described the meeting, and related its events, they prepared to separate for the night. Though Edward was there, John would not be deprived of his usual pleasant walk, and therefore accompanied them home, leaving Marion alone for the few minutes he should be absent. The pleasure of feeling Annie's hand on his arm, of being with her, dispelled some-

what the gloom which had come over John since he had been in the meeting, and the questions she asked forced him to throw it off still more. But ever and anon, like clouds over the moon, it returned and settled down upon him—a gloom too he could not account for,—surely not solely caused by the pictures of distress he had heard, and the sight of it he had obtained that night; true, these were soul-harrowing enough, but hardly of themselves would have produced this strange troubled foreboding. He parted with Annie and her brother cheerfully, however, till to-morrow, and walked hastily homewards. John did not see, neither did Edward, nor even Annie, notice, sharp as fear had lately made her — and though they did stand for a few moments looking after his retreating form — those figures which had dogged them from the meeting, and who now, crouched down behind the low wall of an old park, which John had to pass on his return, lay in treacherous ambuscade to assail him.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN TREACHEROUSLY ATTACKED.

AMONG the turn-out engineers there were some who hated John with a deadly hatred. His steady, unflinching character would have made his conversion to their way of thinking a most important matter, and his refusal to listen to them, his decided firmness in opposing them, had perhaps had more effect in determining many to remain steadfast, who yet kept at work, than he himself was at all aware of, and still farther had aggravated the enmity of the clique of discontented and evil-disposed among the men who were out of work. In addition, it was John who had captured their leader, who had been the principal witness against him and the other men who had been sentenced to imprisonment. John was therefore a dangerous character in their estima-

tion, with whom more decided measures must be taken to thoroughly intimidate him or altogether remove him from the place, or even—still more darkly was it hinted—to remove him forcibly in another way. In justice to the engineers as a body, and as a society, anything like these dark purposes of revenge was hateful to and detested by them. It was all very well to frighten by the use of big words, to intimidate by threats of what would be done, or by occasional skirmishes with the “knobs,” quite right also to bribe them to give way, but secret violence, even to a declared enemy of their cause, was abhorrent to them. For even granting that the parties doing such a deed were not found out, to a certainty the act itself would be laid at the door of the men on strike. To take a secret hidden revenge for a public act was most unlike them as Scotsmen, and still more as engineers, the first of artisans. But notwithstanding the leading men and committee disapproved of such an act, and ever would do so, there was unhappily a clique of evil-disposed men, friends so called of Peachem’s, who had determined to be revenged, and

to-night was the appointed time on which the deed should be done.

John and Edward had been recognised at the meeting, and pointed out to two or three strangers, who had come from a distance on purpose to be the agents in the foul transaction — servile imitators in this of those cowardly and brutal associations, the Ribbon clubs of Ireland. It would be less dangerous for men strangers to the town, there would be so much less risk of their being recognised. These assassins in purpose had dogged the steps of the two young men to John's lodgings, and having waited till they came out again — they had such general knowledge it seemed of John's habits — they tracked him and the Archbolds through the quiet streets, and by keeping in the shade they could watch their victim, and take advantage of any opportunity which might be afforded. The broken wall of the old park gave them a good cover, whence they could suddenly issue, and behind it they waited the return of their intended victim.

Before long the quick beat of his footsteps was heard on the uneven pavement,

and John was seen rapidly drawing near the gateway of the park, which threw the corner where they stood into a deeper shadow. John had little thought of such treachery, and even though his mind had been so overshadowed, and *was* even now, as he proceeded swiftly homewards, he never either dreamed or dreaded anything from secret foes. John was much too manly in himself, and his notion of his fellow-craftsmen much too high, to permit him to fear evil in such a form, and thus he came along unfearing and carelessly. The plan of the plot was this: one of the cowardly fellows who knew him — the very individual with the peculiarly marked hand Edward and he had fallen in with in Northumberland, a devoted partisan of Peachem's — was to get out of the park farther along the wall, and make sure that this was the victim who approached, and at his signal the others were to rush out and master him. The work required to be done speedily and noiselessly, that they might escape unquestioned and undetected; therefore they had determined upon some such murderous method of onslaught as that since called

garrotting, so that his cries for help might be stifled or prevented altogether, and the physical power of the victim paralysed. When John then had arrived within two steps of the gate, into the very depth of the shadow, he was met by the traitor.

"Tell us th' way to th' docks, maister, wilt thou?" said the decoy in a tipsy voice, and in the fashion a drunken Yorkshireman might ask such a question.

"Why, you're going the wrong way," John answered; "you're going from, not to the docks. Turn back, go round the first corner, then hold straight down, and you can't miss reaching them."

"Ah, thank ye, maister. Canst thou tell us th' time?"

John looked at the man more narrowly, not remembering at first where he could have seen him before, but as the fellow lifted up his maimed hand so singularly marked — the appointed signal — it flashed on his mind in a moment.

"Didn't I see you a little while ago at Hetton Waste?" he said, in surprise. "What's brought you here? In want of a job, eh? I fear ——"

But John's fear, whatever it was, was never expressed. In an instant he was surrounded and seized by the conspirators, and while some laid hold of his arms, his neckerchief was firmly grasped, and with hands of iron twisted like a cord tightly round his neck. He could not utter a word or cry, and though he struggled desperately, and before his powers were completely paralysed had knocked the traitor down like a log on the causeway, he could not free himself. He felt his senses going fast as he struggled in agony for breath, but the iron hands did not relax. Yet with almost preternatural acuteness he caught the voices of his assailants, and discovered so much of the plot. But Palmer, the man he had knocked down, soon recovered his feet, and rose, his head streaming with blood from the violence with which it had been driven against the stones of the pavement, and, moreover, with all the bad passions of his nature in a ferment. No sooner was he on his legs, than he attacked the powerless, now almost insensible John with the greatest ferocity, brutally striking him to the earth, and accomplishing by

the severity of the fall what the strangulation had almost already brought about. Then, not content, he continued still more brutally to strike and kick the inanimate body.

"Have done, Palmer, he's gotten enough," said one of the gang. "We'd best be off, while the coast's clear, every man for himself now, and the sooner out of the town the better. Be done, you brute, there'll be the devil to pay for this job."

Palmer had repeated the kick furiously; but now, as the others began to disappear in different directions, he thought it full time for himself to do the same, and to seek his own safety. But first he laid hold of the plaid and watch which John wore, then fled, leaving the poor fellow to all appearance a bloody mangled corpse, where only a minute or two before he had stood a warm-hearted, cheerful, active man. There he lay in his blood, the generous friend, the earnest worker, the man whose greatest object was to elevate himself and his class by the trade. There he lay, blood streaming from the severe wounds on his head, one of those strong arms doubled under

him, all in a heap, as living body could hardly lie, stricken down by cowardly assassins in diabolical revenge.

Coming up the hill, wan and weary, with sad hearts and minds foreboding, because of the bitter and sad experience of these few past weeks, what they must expect in the weeks to come, were Thomson and Blair; those two men who had visited John long ago, before the strike had begun. Often since that time they have remembered his advice, and though neither as yet has confessed it to the other, they have thought how much wiser they would have been, had they followed the course he had pointed out. Sadly and wearily they drew near along this wall, little thinking of the discovery they were about to make, which should startle them once more into prompter action than they had known or practised for many a day. A lamp on the other side of the street threw a dim, uncertain light upon the corner where John lay, and they were close upon him, before they saw the ghastly object which stretched across their path.

“Gude guide us, Sandy, man! See here,”

Blair cried, as he almost stumbled over the inanimate body of John, "if it's no a deid man!"

"The Lord help us, but it's e'en sae. Wha can it be, I wonder, an' how cam' it here?" Thomson exclaimed in reply.

Both of these men were now fairly roused from their apathy, and they bent together over the body. Not for an instant could they think it was only a mischance happened to one under the influence of drink. Uncertain as the light was, the attitude, the disordered dress, the cap lying on one side, the blood which had streamed from the wounded head, all told their own story of fearful deadly violence. As they gently and carefully removed the twisted neckcloth, and put the limbs into a more natural position, John uttered a feeble groan, though yet quite unconscious, which caused both the men to start in alarm, and then quickened them in their further proceedings.

"Rin ye down, Sandy, for the police, an' ca' at the first doctor's ye come tae on the road, an' send him up here. I'll stay by the puir fellow. Some ane 'll ha'e to an-

swer for this nicht's wark; so haste ye, man."

"Ay, ay," Thomson cried, as he hurried away, and the next minute Blair could hear the loud peal of a bell resounding through the quiet street, as Thomson stopped at a doctor's door for an instant, and then set off again down the hill at a run towards the police office. These poor men had taken the best and wisest course, — to wait in that quiet place for the coming of the policeman of the beat would have been both foolish and criminal, and to leave the unfortunate man to his fate by himself, was what, foolish and misguided as they had been, they would not and could not do. While Blair waited the coming of the doctor and the police, he once more bent over and examined John more carefully. It was not easy to recognise him in the dim and feeble light, but Blair could see that robbery had been committed as well as murder; the ribbon round the neck, with the broken swivel of the watch still attached, proved that; and on looking closer still, as he lifted up the head to a better position, Blair started, and nearly fell over the body



as he saw that it was John Arnold. Dreadfully shocked, too much startled indeed at first to think of anything but the horrible nature of the outrage, and with deep pity for the sufferer, he in a little became much alarmed, for the idea rushed into his mind, that this most certainly would be regarded as a trade outrage, as most likely it was; and as Thomson and himself were both well known as leaders of the turn-out men, that they were almost certain to be suspected, at least of knowing about it, if not of being *participes criminis* in the deed itself. Blair would have given anything to be well out of this business; but was at the same time by far too manly, and too humane, to leave the suffering man, even though he himself should be suspected.

Ere long the doctor, a sharp, clever, active young practitioner, made his appearance, grumbling, it is true, that he should have to leave the pleasant party he was entertaining. But "a man lying murdered," almost at his own door, could not be left; attendance instantanè was an imperative duty; besides, the young doctor had his way

to win, his reputation to establish in the town. He saw in a moment that John was very badly hurt, and required instant removal and careful handling. He saw, moreover, that this man had been engaged in no drunken brawl, and though his hard toil-hardened hand proved that he was an artisan, his appearance seemed to say that he might prove a not unprofitable patient. The doctor was rather scarce of such, and therefore resolved to make the most he could of this windfall. Otherwise, if he had not been pleased with the appearance of John, as he lay before him covered with blood, he would have had him sent to the hospital at once. His examination, slight as it was, showed that one arm was broken, and the wound on the head looked serious. Blair had taken away the neckerchief, and freed the throat at the very first, and perhaps that helped as much as anything to bring John back to consciousness. As the police came up, he began to moan painfully, as if the anguish of his wounds was beginning to be more acutely felt.

"It's Arnold, Sandy, John Arnold," Blair cried as Thomson came up with two



or three officers. "Puir fellow, to think now o' you an' me findin' him here!"

"Gude be mercifu' to us!" Thomson answered; "is't him?—wha can hae dune this, I wonder?"

"Oh!" cried one of the officers, "I ken this man, this is ane o' Morton's hands — an engineer. He was a witness in that case a while syne. But I dinna ken whar he leeves. Stay, he gangs unco aften to a house hereawa' some gate."

"Mr. Archbold's; yes, they're very chief," said Blair in reply. "Maybe it 'ud be the best way to gang for him."

"No, stop you here," the chief officer said, "I'll send."

By this time a number of people had gathered, and the alarm had spread down the street on either side, that "a man had been murdered up-bye at the park." Edward Archbold, sitting with his mother and Annie, heard the uproar in the street below, and growing concerned, through the murmur and the clamour which increased without, when the definite cause took shape in words, and came to his ear, "a man murdered," he seized his cap, and in a state of

alarm for which he could not account, rushed to the street, only to meet the officer sent for him. The man soon told his tale, and Edward was stricken speechless with horror and grief at first, and for a time could not think what to do; but as the surgeon pressed him to tell where John should be taken, he recovered his coolness by a great effort, and, while the men were extemporising a conveyance, rushed back to tell his mother and Annie. It would be impossible to describe the horror of them both, the agony of Annie,—only a short while ago they had parted so full of high hope and heart — and this, what was this she was told now? that he was lying in the street murdered! Edward's incoherent explanation did not tell the true state of the case, the first word yet remained, "murdered." Annie well knew that John Arnold loved her, she knew as well that she loved him, but now, without the power of publicly, openly, mourning him, she must conceal her true feelings, suffer in silence, and bury the arrow in her bosom. Had John died, and made no sign, oh how dreadful was the thought! But Marion, poor Marion, a

stranger among strangers, flashed on Annie's mind, and she rose out of her own stunning trouble at once.

"Oh! mother, dear mother, the poor lassie, let us go to her, to Marion; she is alone, come, mother."

And Annie almost dragged her out of the room to get her shawl and bonnet, that they might go.

Edward had hastened away again, and before the men were ready to set out with their sad burthen, Mrs. Archbold and her daughter had come up, and had looked for a moment—Annie with passionate earnestness—on the swollen bloody face, and had listened with such sharp anguish to the heavy groans, that had Annie not been hurried away, she must have forgotten herself even in the presence of all there gathered.

Marion, sitting by herself, had begun to weary, and then from wearying for John's return, she had become alarmed about him. He had never stayed thus before, and she could neither think of nor devise a reason wherefore he should stay so late out to-night. Perhaps something had happened

which had made him lose count of time. Marion remembered various times herself when this had happened, — it might be so with John to-night, — and he would come home so glad, and to make her also so glad, she fancied. But still there was a vague fear about her, for which she could not account. Had it not been for pure shame, and no little fear of going out into the streets by herself so late at night, she would have gone to Mrs. Archbold's to seek him. Minute by minute she sat, her fear continually increasing. The book she had been reading was laid aside, and unless he came soon, she must ask her landlord to send some one, or to go with her himself, the suspense was becoming so dreadful. But there was news at hand, a ring of the bell startled yet calmed her, until she heard the sound of a voice which was not the voice of John, and of feet in the passage of more than one person, and then a blind sick feeling of agony crept over her, and when the door of the room opened and Mrs. Archbold and Annie came in, she could scarcely see who it was. A glance at Annie's face was quite sufficient to tell that some ca-

lunacy had happened, but Marion could not see, could hardly hear, in fact she seemed stricken down entirely for the moment: the presence itself of her friends told of misery to come, and poor Marion lay in Mrs. Archbold's arms as passive as a child while the dreadful news were plainly told. When she had heard all, when they told that the men bearing her brother were at the door, Marion at once seemed as if awaked into a new life, and raising herself up again she became—though her whole frame shook and trembled—calmer and earnestly alive to what must be done. As one stunned by a heavy blow she was at first, and most likely would have continued, had not there been a necessity for her services, her womanly services,—then she almost as suddenly revived when the time of need came.

But the bearers of John are at the door; a minute or two more and he was laid upon his own bed, where the surgeon proceeded to examine and dress his wounds. It was soon found that in addition to being nearly strangled, as witness the neck encircled with a livid ring, the swollen discoloured face and inflamed eyes, he had received a severe

scalp wound, which however the surgeon seemed to think rather a benefit in the circumstances than otherwise, and besides his left arm was broken, and his chest greatly contused, clearly by the brutal kicks of his assailants: a very serious catalogue of injuries, and threatening John with, at the very least, long weeks of suffering. The surgeon dressed the wounds, set the broken bones, and got him into as comfortable a state as possible, and John, revived to a state of consciousness, began truly to feel how barbarously he had been abused.

The surgeon would not allow any questions to be asked, but Marion and the Archbolds were admitted to his bedside, that they might see with their own eyes his state, and Annie, the tears running unrestrainedly down her cheeks, could only take and caress that hard hand,—she could not speak. Yet even this was a great relief, the seeing him once more restored to consciousness, though in the mean time that was chiefly a consciousness of suffering; and though they were all greatly, deeply distressed, yet that they could do something for him still in good hope, greatly

comforted and strengthened them all. Annie would not leave Marion, but Mrs. Archbold and Edward could go home, and so they left his room, John understanding the arrangement, and in his heart blessing Annie for her secret caress and present purpose.

Even if the surgeon had permitted it, John could not have spoken half a dozen sentences, his tongue was so greatly swollen; but seeing the police serjeant in the room, he beckoned him to come near, and as the officer bent over him he managed to say, "Strangers, men on strike," and when the policeman brought in Blair and his companion Thomson, he emphatically testified that they had no hand in the onslaught. So the decent men who looked on John with deep pity and compassion, perhaps with much compunction also, having expressed their sorrow and horror at the deed, were dismissed for the night. The police and the surgeon likewise departed, and John was left alone in his pain and suffering, but having by his bedside till he sunk into slumber two such comforters as Marion, and dearer still than Marion, Annie Archbold.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT EFFECT SYMPATHY, SHAME AND
HORROR HAVE ON THE TURN-OUTS.

THE morning eagerly looked for broke at last. Poor John, fully conscious now, only too conscious, of his unfortunate state, was suffering greatly, but he was so far better that he could speak again. All night long the girls had watched in the next room — retiring to bed they found to be impossible, and so they watched or twined in each other's arms, sunk into short snatches of disturbed slumber — sleeping from sorrow — while the motherly landlady, more used to night-watching, dozed away comfortably by John's bedside. The doctor had taken care that the wounded man should not give them much trouble during the night, and to the exhaustion caused by the struggle and loss of blood, had added

the force of a soporific, and John, in spite of his wounds, rested quietly. Very early in the morning Edward was at his bedside, and found him asleep; he went to the engine factory, where the story told to the foreman speedily circulated through all the shops, gathering in force and intensity as it passed from hand to hand, and taking colour from the minds through which it passed in its transmission. By some Blair and Thomson were accused openly as the guilty perpetrators of the deed, and a fear fell upon the men, such as they had not felt since this unhappy state of things began. Whose turn should it be next was asked by many, and perhaps had the impression that morning produced by this blow been allowed to remain and to prevail, the great object of the assailants might have been gained, and with the revenge they had taken on John, the men might have been terrified out of the works. But this deed was to have a very different effect.

The news reached Mr. Morton at his breakfast-table, from his own foreman, and the head of the police at the same

time. The few words John had spoken the previous night had given a sort of direction to the officers where to look for the guilty parties, which the most astute of the detectives had been trying to fashion into something which would enable them to lay hold of the criminals. The two men, Thomson and Blair, had been strongly suspected of knowing much more of the affair than they chose to acknowledge, even if they themselves were not actually guilty, and only John's emphatic denial had saved them from being locked up all night. As it was they were to appear before Mr. Fiscal that morning to be examined as to how they had found the injured man. As may be supposed, Mr. Morton was dreadfully grieved and indignant at what had happened, and went off in haste to take council with the lawyer, what should now be done, or rather what he should now do, for like all men of mental vigour and strong will he chafed at the idea of waiting idly while others dallied over the work, himself powerless and unable to act, and yet the emergency so great. But what could be done must



be done quietly, almost, if not altogether, in secret, and already police emissaries were out in all directions, and careful inquiries were being made as to who among the men on strike were likely to be guilty of such a crime. Fretting and fuming at his own impotence then, Mr. Morton turned away to call on his hurt servant, an act to which both the cause of the misfortune and the estimation in which he held the young inventor impelled him. The doctor was with John when he entered the house, and even Mr. Morton, strong man as he was, shuddered as he heard the deep groans, evidently wrung from the strong man by the extremity of pain. That was soon over, and the doctor having finished the dressing of the wounds, and more perfectly arranged the bandages which he had applied in haste last night, the poor fellow felt more comfortable and much easier, and recognised Mr. Morton as he entered the room.

“This is a bad business, Arnold,” Mr. Morton said, “a very sad and bad business. I should like much to hear how it

happened, if the doctor will permit you, and you think you are able to tell me."

- "Not just yet, Mr. Morton," the doctor answered. "Allow him a little time to collect himself. It's always a trying hour for a patient, the one he has just gone through; besides, he must keep quite calm, and Mr. Fiscal will be here in a few minutes, and one telling must do for all."

Mr. Morton called the surgeon aside.

"What do you think of his state?" he asked; "not very dangerous I hope."

"Most decidedly one of the most severe cases I have ever seen. I do not fear at all but he will get over it, but he has had the merest chance for his life. The brutal fellow who kicked him, did it doubtless in cruelty, but the cut on the head has been his salvation, and relieved the brain."

"Most horrible, but yet most fortunate; but I hope there is really no danger. Severe the hurts must be, but don't say there is danger, doctor."

"Well, it is a very severe case indeed, perhaps I should not say that it is not very dangerous. Yet with such a shock as the attempt at strangulation has given

the system, and the wounds themselves — there are many contingencies — but we shall carry him safely through, I have little fear.”

“And will permit him to tell us his story too.”

“Yes; only the greatest care must be taken against excitement.”

Mr. Morton waited till Mr. Fiscal came, and then the bedroom of John became something like a court of justice. As the lawyer proceeded to take his deposition, Mrs. Archbold joined the girls, and they were all present, and most anxious to hear his story. Edward was there also, and there was quite an audience eagerly waiting on his words. Slowly and painfully John detailed the circumstances before and during the struggle, and when, in answer to questions whether he knew the guilty parties, he said he did, and mentioned the man who had accosted him, describing the peculiarly-marked hand, which made him, as one of the officers who was in attendance said, “ken-speckle.” Edward started in surprise, and at once said that he thought he could

describe his person, as he had taken particular notice of him. John would not say that he knew any of the others. But emphatically he reiterated his certainty that neither Blair nor Thomson was among them, and his belief that they at least could have had no part in the ill-usage he had received. The surgeon cut short the questioning, the pulse of his patient was rising, and he feared the fever which might come, so they were fain to depart with what information they had obtained. All that John knew was comprised in a few sentences, just after Mr. Fiscal's heart, for "guid gear gangs in wee bulk," said he, and so with this clue to one man, and with this further knowledge which John did not possess, but which Marion and Annie supplied, that he had gone out with plaid and watch, and come home without either, the sleuth hounds of the police set out to make another cast, and to find the scent if they could.

What effect had this event, it may be asked, on the revolted engineers? Those men who in ordinary circumstances would

do wilful injury to no one, what did they think of this onslaught on John Arnold? Did they approve or disapprove of the foul deed? How did they act when they knew of it? Did they seek to excuse and clear themselves from suspicion of any complicity with the guilty perpetrators? Or did they seek to screen the offenders? Did they assist and aid the police in their search, or try to impede them? How, above all, did such men as Thomson and Blair feel and act under the stigma which was universally cast upon them?

It was a heavy blow and great discouragement to the strike, this onslaught, so cowardly in its character, so threatening in its results—for it was thought of and spoken about by all with horror as a cruel murder. It disgusted and angered the more respectable part of the misjudging and misguided men. All of them felt, however abhorrent such an act was to their principles or feelings, that they were in some way included in the guilt of this crime, and in the denunciations of the peaceful inhabitants of the town. That it had been committed by some of the men on strike

from feelings of revenge, all agreed. Though nothing was as yet known of the perpetrators, this was the general surmise, and, as we know, not far from the truth. But how should they act so as to clear their own respectable class, without betraying the criminals, if of their own number? How aid the police, and yet not break faith with their brethren? What should be done was a puzzle; and then there was the shame, the disgrace of robbery added; how could they get such a stigma removed from their good name? Those of the leaders who did not know John felt this robbery to be a far more disgraceful thing than the assault, and their faces burned with shame and indignation as they thought of this feature of the deed. A murder even might be explained away, as the result of a struggle, as a hasty act committed under the influence of mad passions, perhaps still farther inflamed with drink, or aroused by the victim's resistance to their rough discipline, and though not to be justified, still far from being so dishonourable as the theft—the theft—they could

by no possibility so easily explain away that.

Even before this, many of the graver thinking men had arrived at the conclusion that they had mistaken their time for a strike. They had made a great mistake, and worse, far worse, than suffering a fair defeat in a fair struggle, they should now lose the day by their own folly and want of foresight and calculation, and several debates had already occurred as to how they should act. Some would not yield; others, most likely feeling the hardships more, were very much inclined to give in, and go back to their work, if they could get it. The number of those thinking so, was daily increasing, and this catastrophe decided many more to adopt their opinion. But as a body they must do more than this, even if they resolved to agree to resume work on the old terms. A meeting of the directing committee, which might in fact be said to sit *en permanence*, was held very early on the day following the attack on John, at which Blair and Thomson related what had happened, how they had found the hurt

man; how eager the police, looking upon them with so much suspicion, had been to get hold of them, till John had so fully and fairly exonerated them from all share in and knowledge of the deed. As might be expected there was a keen discussion of the matter, and a good deal of temper displayed, and hardly one single thing could be agreed upon. At length Thomson, wearied out with the speakers and their aimless speeches, said:—

“Weel, men, ye may say or dae just as ye like, but gin it binna dune sune, there’s naithing for’t that I can see but bearin’ a’ the blame. It’s on us a’; ne’er a ane but folk ’ll look at as ha’ein’ had a han’ in’t, say or dae as ye like. Sicna disgrace shanna be laid at my door, gin I can help it, an’ sae my notion is, we sould offer a rewaird to wha ever ’ll tell wha did it, and sae pruv baith that we’d nae han’ in’t, but that we hate an’ abhor siccan like things.”

“An’ wha’d tell on his niebour, Sandy Thamson, I’d like tae ken,” said the chairman, “wha’d be sae mean as dae that?”

“I ken naethin’ about that,” Blair said;

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"but sumethin' maun be dune. Just think o' that lad. He ne'er dune ony o' us ony ill. He gi'ed Sandy there and me guid advice; if we'd ta'en't, it 'd been a' the better for us the day. An' for a' his hurts, — an' he's sair, sair hurt, men — he was maist as anxious to clear me and Sandy as we could be our very ainsels to get clear off."

"Even sae, an' mair nor that, he wadna speak surely on ony man," Thomson added, "though he kent some o' them tae. But, men, an' ye're no gaun to dae onythin' I ken what I'll dae,—I'll wash my hands o' the concern a'thegither, and gang back to the wark. We maun ha'e made a muckle mistake as tae ha'ing the richt wi' us, whan our ain folk can do the like o' this."

"But how do ye ken wha did it, Sandy. Thamson?" the chairman burst out angrily. "Whatna thing is this, that ye sould lay the blame on us sae keenly, as if we were to bear the dirdom o' a' that's dune in Grasaig the noo."

"Just because it's true. I ha'e nae mair doubt," Thomson answered, "aboot this,

than I ha'e o' the sun bein' i' the sky. Nor men ha'e ye, for a' ye may pretend to say."

"Weel, weel, may be ye're no far wrang," an old man, a member of the committee said; "but we canna be spies or informers at no hand, nor yet wad it dae for us to offer money to tempt folk to become sae. Have ye ony notion o' wha did it yersel? or what for it was dune?"

"Me! no me, I dinna ken aucht," Thomson answered; "but I jalouse it's for his testifyin' again that English loon Peachem. He was but slink at the best, that chap, though he could speak no that ill. I dinna want to be a traitor, nor tae mak' spies or informers. But men, mind our honour demands we sould clear oursels."

"But how?" the chairman asked. "We can a' declare solemnly that we'd neither airt nor pairt in it. I seena that we can dae ony mair. It 'll be too bad to blame the society for the deed, maist likely, o' some thochtless fuilish callant."

"Sae it is though, and sae it 'll be," Blair answered. "Comin' sae close on the

ither folly tae, there's no the ghost o' a chance noo o' us gettin' what we socht; there was little, hardly ony, before, noo there's nane at a'. Let us e'en draw up a paper, and let the toun ken that we disapprove o' crimes o' this sort as muckle as ony ane in it."

"Ay, ay, let it be sae," was echoed through the room; and the clerk of the society began to draw up a statement expressing the horror and indignation of the engineers at the nefarious deed.

"Noo," said Thomson, "this is how we stan'. There is no ae hope — in our place ony way — o' gettin' a change i' the noo, an' sae I'm for giein' in, an' ga'en' back; wi' the society's will if I can get it, without it if I maun ——"

Here Thomson was interrupted with shouts of disapproval from many of the younger men, who, earnestly as they longed to be back at work again, could not stomach the idea of giving in so easily, and so absolutely without conditions, nor Thomson's threat of renouncing the society, unless they agreed with him. But the more temperate of the men, who

already inclined to recommend the adoption of the same course, clearly showed that one or two concessions had been offered in some of the works, and if the men were to be allowed to take work where they chose, or where they could get it, perhaps these same concessions would be granted by all the masters. When quiet was restored again, Thomson continued:—

“Noo, men, ye nicht just as weel ha’e heard me out at first. There’s no ane — as is weel kenned — has had mair tae dae wi’ the society than me, but raither than ha’e airt or pairt in sic a thing as this again, I’ll gi’e it up frae this very hour. I’ll no say i’ the noo that I leave it, but I’ll tak’ nae mair say in ony o’ its committees again ony way.”

“Nor me either, Sandy,” said Blair eagerly. “Wha kens? it may be some ane that we got to jine that’s brocht this disgrace on us. I hope it isna; but wha can say? I’ll gang tae Mr. Morton wi’ ye, Sandy, — there’s nae sayin’, maybe he’ll dae mair gin he’s humoured, nor gin he’s driven.”

The meeting broke up in some confu-

sion. Had a shell fallen into that dingy, bare room where they sat, it could not have more completely dispersed and disorganised this committee, than what had happened did: it shook the strike to pieces. Any, the least concession to the men, whether it had reference to the original demands or not, would now be eagerly accepted; and before the day was many hours older, the men all over the town knew that all the blockaded shops would be open again, so far as the ruling committee could open them. The flag of defiance and mutiny would be lowered, and the mutineers, if they so pleased, could slink back to their old shops, if they could get again employed. Ay, truly a wise proviso. Many men during this short interval had made for themselves a name, and got a notoriety, these last few weeks, which would not improve their position as workmen, nor make them more acceptable to masters or foremen than they were before; and if any one had cause to fear for the future it was they.

Thomson and Blair left the meeting, and hard as it was, trying as they felt it



would be, they resolved to see Mr. Morton, if he would only look favourably upon them. They fancied John's good word might be of consequence; therefore, they went to see him, if they might be permitted. Poor fellows! perhaps they felt more when they met with Marion and Annie, and saw the marks of suffering and anxiety in their faces, than they had done when threatened with arrest. And then, instead of the reproaches which almost any stranger would have cast upon them, as having been concerned, however remotely, in the assault, these girls were eagerly grateful for the service they had rendered to John, and Mrs. Archbold, hearing what their errand was, promised that Edward should go with them to Mr. Morton, if that would do any good. The sight of John, pallid, and with head and arm swathed in bandages, lying there so helpless, hardly able to turn his head, even in the slightest degree, to look at them, but still able to smile a welcome, affected those strong men even to tears; and one after the other they took his hand—not to declare their innocence, for he

had been the first to assert it—but to declare the sorrow they felt for what had happened, saying that it had opened their eyes, and now, if Mr. Morton would let them, they would go back, they would do so heartily and willingly. When they left the room, assured by the few words John could speak of the certainty of their obtaining what assistance he could give, they went with lighter hearts and better hope. As they parted with Mrs. Archbold and the girls, Thomson said,—

“I canna tell ye, mem, hoo I feel to see that braw lad lying there sae badly hurt. I’d a thousan’ times raither they’d set on me my ainsel; an’ to think we sould be wyted wi’ it. I canna get ower wi’ it ava’. I dinna think ony o’ our ain lads had oucht adae wi’ it; but ony way the Apostle says,—‘We arena to do ill that guid may come,’ and surely, surely, we only socht what we thocht guid, and naething but guid, but this is ill wi’ a vengeance, and sae my niebour and me, we canna thole oucht mair wi’ the strike. The seed maun be unco ill when the outcome’s sae fell bad.”



CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE SUFFERINGS OF JOHN ARNOLD WERE
LIGHTENED.

MARION, as soon as she had heard the surgeon's report, and much against the will of John, had written home to Outchester. However much the society and assistance of Mrs. Archbold and Annie strengthened and comforted her, she felt that her mother was the proper person to be with and to tend her wounded brother; so, while trying as much as she possibly could to prevent them being alarmed overmuch, she told of his misfortune, and urged her mother to come to Grasaig. A simpler tale would perhaps have been better; but Marion thought to soften the matter to them, and, as is almost always the case, only made it worse instead of better, and the arrival of her letter at the farm caused a dismay in



Outchester such as had never been felt there before. Mrs. Arnold lamented deeply and loudly, but she was not one to be content with lamentation. The blow struck heavily upon them all, but upon her far more severely; yet ere an hour had passed she was busied in preparations to go to her son. The old man could not then easily leave the farm, but the mother, one of the most timid persons, so far as travelling went, in the world, thought not of that, felt it not at the present time. All the mother's heart was roused, and though she paused often in her preparations, and wrung her hands and moaned aloud in her anguish, she never ceased or even faltered in her purpose.

"Will ye read this?" she said to Mr. Johnson. "Oh! read it, hinny, and see whatana awfu' thing 's happened my boy. Oh! that I should live to hear the like o' him, and that I shouldna be nigh at hand to tent him."

"What will you do? What do you think of doing?" Mr. Johnson asked, after he had read Marion's letter.

"Gang till him, gang this very day. My puir lad!" and the mother wept again and



wrung her hands. "I maun gang, Marion's very weel, and his friends ha'e been extraordinary kind; but I maun gang mysel'."

"Of course Mr. Arnold will go with you?" Mr. Johnson neither attempted to comfort Mrs. Arnold nor to express his sympathy in words; the time was not come for that yet. Action, now, he thought, was worth fifty sermons to the afflicted mother.

"No, he canna gang, but that's naething; he couldna do muckle an' he did. I can gang my lane."

"No, you cannot, dear Mrs. Arnold, and you shall not either. I will go with you myself."

"You! God bless you, Sir, but it's just like you; but then how can ye gang and leave the meetin' on Sabbath?"

"Oh, well enough. Mr. Fraser is always saying he would like to take a day, and in this case will do it gladly. I'll write him a note and tell him the cause."

"May God bless you, Sir, and in His name let us gang. We'll ha'e to be off in an hour to get the last coach."

"I'm ready now, at least in five minutes

will be. But be as calm as you can, dear Mrs. Arnold, and get yourself ready. I'll just write the note, and then, when you please, we can go."

Mr. Johnson astonished all the good people about Outchester by his promptitude in this same matter of travelling. An hour at any time sufficed him for preparation, where the worthy people needed days. In this case Mr. and Mrs. Arnold were almost as prompt as himself. A boy was despatched to Framlington to receive and bring back the gig, and before the hour was ended Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Arnold were on their journey to Grasaig, that *terra incognita* which at present contained, one may safely say, the hearts of them both. It is not to be denied that the idea of seeing Marion had no small share in inducing Mr. Johnson to accompany the old lady. Little doubt he would have done it had she been at home, but far more readily now, when she was away, and this journey gave him an opportunity of seeing her; and, seeing that Marion's heart must needs be softened by the circumstances of their meeting, perhaps with more success to declare

his love than if he waited on the banks of Hetton Water for her homecoming.

John continued feverish, and had suffered great pain. Then to his active nature this enforced quiet and idleness were very galling. He felt sometimes tempted to murmur with impatience that he should be laid up here, while all his ideas for the new engine were being realised by men who, in every step, would be so much the better of his oversight. Then the presence of Marion and the Archbolds had been too exciting, the doctor said. However, on this the fourth evening of his suffering, Annie was the watcher, almost for the first time alone, and thus alone by accident, and because they thought the sufferer slept. But he was not asleep, at least he woke up as soon as Mrs. Archbold had left the room. Edward and Marion had gone to the railway-station to meet Mrs. Arnold—Marion judged correctly that, as quick as the journey could be made, her mother would come. For a while John lay awake in silence, watching Annie as she sat by the fire, the light of the gas shining down upon her graceful form, and bringing out clearly and sharply



the beautiful profile of face and bust. Annie had a book in her hand, but she was not reading; she seemed in maiden meditation, whether fancy free is another question, but there could be no doubt about the meditation, and John lay there on the couch, so still and quiet, earnestly regarding her. Her thoughts did not seem to be of the quietest, either, for he noticed now and again a shadow pass over the beautiful face, and the fine eyes fill with tears, and a deep half sob, half moan issue from the scarcely parted lips. It was clearly evident that something greatly disturbed Annie Archbold. What could it be? Did it concern, or was it about him. There was in John, as in all young men, a considerable amount of selfish curiosity as to whether he himself held the chief place in Annie's thoughts. His state was on the whole better, and promised better; what then could trouble Annie, if it was of him she was thinking? and why did she clench her little hand and frown? John could not know by intuition, perhaps, that pity for his sufferings, and something more tender even than pity, with anger at the dastards who had caused

them, gave origin to those sighs that came from her heart, and to those shadows which swept over her speaking face, and knitted those slender fingers so firmly. At length he spoke, very feebly indeed, for John felt his weakness more now than he had done at first.

"Annie, dear Annie!"

Annie started violently, and the book dropped from her hand, as she looked half frightened towards the couch; then she rose and came near.

"How you frightened me! I thought you were asleep. Do you want anything, John? I will go and call——"

"No, Annie dear, don't call anybody; only stay yourself; don't run away now, as you have done before. Tell me, Annie, was anything vexing you just now, before I spoke?"

"No; nothing but what has been doing so for days. I was just thinking of those brutal cowards. But I must not speak about them."

"Dear Annie, sit down for a little beside me, will you?"

She sat down, and he put out his sound

right hand, hard and toil-worn, but already, even from these few days of seclusion, assuming a wan and pallid hue. Annie could not do otherwise than take it in her own, rather, perhaps, she trusted her delicate hand to those long, strong fingers, which closed over it as if for life, with grasp so gentle, yet so firm, that she felt it was hopeless to withdraw it, even if she had the wish. Both of them felt, perhaps, less awkward just then than if in the time of high health their hands had met in the same fashion; but even now Annie's eyes fell before the glance of John, who seemed to wish to reach and read her very soul. Her face flushed, her pulse beat more quickly, and her form trembled, as she seemed to feel that something more solemn than usual was about to happen.

"Annie," John said, drawing her closer to him as he spoke, "Annie, do I need to tell you, in words, how dearly I love you; do I, dearest? I did not mean to say so much as that even, till my fortune had been so far decided, but——"

"Oh, John, don't speak any more. You must not excite yourself. Don't now; you know your mother may be here to-night,

and we mustn't have her find you in a high fever, to the shame of our nursing."

"Truly not, if I can help it; but you haven't answered me, dearest Annie. I would not have said anything about love; dearly as I love you, I would have been content to wait till a better, and may be a fitter time, but my heart got so full, is too full indeed, just now, to wait. I must speak, and, dearest, if anything should happen to me I should not like to pass away without ever having said that I loved you very dearly, better than my very life. Annie, you hear me; will you answer me?"

John's hand was hot. Could this be an attack of delirium, or a forewarning of departure which prompted him to speak out now so earnestly and solemnly, and with such a depth of pathos in his voice as she had never observed before. What could Annie do? To keep him in suspense would have been the extremity of cruelty, and very hazardous; besides, it would be untrue to herself to say no to him at any time, and more so just now. The surgeon's constantly repeated cautions were to avoid excitement, and he was excited beyond all gainsaying

now, but hesitation on her part would only make it worse, and excite him more and more.

"Oh, Annie dearest, will you not answer me?" he asked again, in a voice of pathetic entreaty. "Have I indeed made such a great mistake?"

"What shall I answer, John? You have asked me a question, ask the same of yourself as from me, and your answer will be mine also. You know, John, what I mean."

"Yes, I fancy I do, and the Lord bless you for it; but in words, Annie dearest and best, tell me."

"I have thought of it often, and known it long, John, and the thought has been very dear and precious to me."

"Bless you, dearest, bless you. Ah! that I may be spared, and soon able to ask you in another time, and place, and way; but bound up this way, helpless and like a log; oh! it's terribly tantalizing and provoking. Annie dearest, say you love me."

"Love you, dear John, ay, I love you better than all the world. If it will give you any pleasure and ease, why should I not say it? Yes, John, I love you very dearly."



"Oh! this is so dreadful," John almost groaned, as he lay helpless, with that earnest face so near him, and those tempting lips so close before him, and yet unable to move, or do more than lift the prisoned hand to his own lips.

"Put your cool hands on my brow, dearest," he said; "let me feel in my helplessness the soft touch of my own dear one's fingers; it will refresh my poor head better than anything else in the world."

Annie wiped away a few tears, much happier ones than those she had shed a little while ago, and bending over him, kissed his brow and passed her cool soft hand over the heated face, smoothing back the masses of tangled hair which escaped from the bandages, and then, as his arm glided round her neck and her glowing face was brought close to his, she pressed her lips to his, in a long betrothal kiss, in which it seemed as if their souls held fellowship, and were joined together. Annie raised her head with a vivid blush suffusing her sweet face, almost of shame at having as it were taken the initiative; but the glowing happy look of that other face, so pale and

melancholy a short while, ago would have satisfied her, had she needed to be satisfied, that she had done right. She sought to calm him now, and soothed him, and as if she had newly acquired the right to do so, she caressed the wounded head and bandaged arm, touching them with her soft and gentle fingers as if they had been as delicate as those of an infant newborn, while he, feeling her presence in the very air about him, and with his sound hand now hidden in the luxuriant silky masses of her hair, which fell around, now touching the downy cheek, and anon twining round her neck as she bent over him, felt as if in Elysium. After a little she sat beside him more quietly, her hand firmly grasped as before, but bending forward so that her breath fanned his cheek. Her eyes dropped shyly before his glance, and he grew calmer. He had been calm, indeed, before, but this little scene had raised the pulse, and made his heart beat more fully and strongly than it would have done, yet still John would not be silent, though he spoke very quietly now.

“The good Lord bless you, dearest, evermore! It was very selfish and very wrong

of me to break through all my purposes, but I could not resist the promptings of my heart. I am selfish, you see; I suppose all men are in such cases; but, dearest Annie, though one may think himself very sure, it is only such sweet proof as your dear lips have given me that can give certainty, or could have done me good to-night."

Annie's left hand was gently touching his brow, so that by word and action she was seeking to calm and soothe him.

"Hush now, John dear. You must be very quiet now, indeed you must. Mother 'll be here soon, and your mother too. Oh! what shall I do, what in the world shall I do? But be calm, dear, and don't speak any more now."

"Oh! dearest Annie, this speaking does me good. These thoughts have been like to burst forth for weeks, always gathering strength too, and for the last day or two especially, have I not seen and felt you near me, even when I did not see you? Now, when I can say my own Annie, my dearest one, I'll get better every hour. Yes, dearest, you'll soon see the effect of this hour.

Oh! I could repeat the word for ever, sweet one."

"But I'll have to run away if you go on so," Annie said, blushing more and more at each successive tender epithet. "How they will exclaim at me when they see you so excited! Oh! John, I had better go."

"No, no, Annie. Oh! if I were only afoot again; this weary idleness, this uselessness——"

"Now, John, you must not repine. This constant chafing will only make you worse for the present, and longer of getting about again. Don't speak any more; try to sleep now, and I'll sit by you the while."

"I must obey, I suppose; but oh! I don't repine, it's God's doing, and therefore good. If I were only out again and at work! I'll do in my way what a great warrior says he would do in his. You know Montrose's lines, dearest?"

"I do not; but never mind them just now, John."

"Oh yes, I will; here they are. The first two are only a caution, and so could never have reference to my Annie, but all the others may have."

“‘ But if no faithless action strain
Thy love and constant word,
I'll make thee famous by my pen,
And glorious by my sword,
I'll serve thee in such noble ways
As ne'er were known before ;
I'll deck and crown thy head with bays,
And love thee more and more.’

I want to get on foot again to do this, my own Annie, in my own way, and for thee.”

John continued silent after this, and then gradually seemed to sink into a quiet slumber, holding fast, however, Annie's hand. Annie sat there once more, musing as before, but not exactly in the same way, perhaps not exactly on the same subject either, certainly on a very different phase of it. Now in the midst of her meditations she could bend over her betrothed and again press her lips to his lips and brow, and there was an assured look in her countenance and a light, gleaming in her eyes when you could see them, about which there were no shadows. Yet there seemed something unusual about Annie too. She had for the last few days been sadder and graver than ever before ; but it was not that, the sadness and gravity

were greatly softened now, but there was a downcast hesitating look, a shamefacedness, a certain shrinking appearance, as if she either had done wrong or feared the others would think she had. While looking on John, the eyes were beaming with affection and sympathy; when she thought of her mother and the others, the bashful, timid look returned.

John opened his eyes as a ring at the door-bell told of the arrival of some one, and gently and calmly fixed them on the face he loved best on earth; and as the sound of a footstep approached, he drew Annie to himself to salute him once more before any stranger could come in to interrupt them. It was Mrs. Archbold herself, and though Annie strove to withdraw her hand from John's grasp, he held it fast till her mother came into the room. Mrs. Archbold was very much surprised indeed to see Annie fixed by the couch of John, and as she looked at her daughter, so bashful and confused, she was about to speak reprovingly, when John in a few words told her all. Perhaps Mrs. Archbold had guessed the state of affairs long ago; mayhap had expected such a



revelation as this before, yet certainly she was surprised both at the time and place that had been chosen. But she clasped her daughter in her arms, and then bending down kissed John's cheek. Though she only spoke gently a reproof to both for the excitement under which he had laboured, John justly reckoned that kiss a token of approval, and Annie felt that one part at least of the ordeal had been passed through.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. ARNOLD IN GRASAIG.

WHILE John Arnold and Annie Archbold were so agreeably and excitingly engaged, Marion and Edward, waiting for the expected train, were walking slowly up and down the platform at the railway station. Would her mother come to-night, and if so, would she come alone? Marion questioned. She had begun to doubt of the necessity of, to repent almost of her precipitancy in, writing as she had done, when she imagined the old matron journeying in a strange land, in novel conveyances, and by new fashions, and having to encounter the manifold annoyances and troubles of not only the long journey itself, but the change of vehicles, and the passage from one place to another in the strange towns. But Marion never dreamed that Mrs. Arnold

would have such a first-rate guide. At the very best she had thought of her father, and never for a moment imagined that the young minister would come with her. The train at last came in, and sure enough there was Mrs. Arnold, and there also, caring for her as a son might do, to Marion's great surprise and no little confusion, was the young priest. Mr. Johnson's quick eye, roving over the platform at hap-hazard—not with the expectation of seeing any one he knew—soon lighted up with new fire as he caught sight of her figure, and that of her companion, whom he by no means so pleasantly regarded.

"There's Miss Marion and Mr. Archbold," he said to Mrs. Arnold.

Mrs. Arnold's anxiety to get on alone enabled her to bear up against the tumult, noise, and confusion she had passed through during the day, to say nothing of the present deadly fear this dreadful mode of travelling inspired.

"Where?" she asked. "Pity me! how could she leave my puir boy?"

"There," Mr. Johnson repeated, pointing



out the two figures as they stood scanning each carriage with eager eyes. "Depend upon it, ma'am, it will just turn out as I've all along said, that John is doing very well—Miss Marion would not leave him if there was any danger."

"God grant it may be sae! And this is the end of our travel, guid be thankit too for that!"

Marion soon came up, and was busied answering her mother's eager questions, ere they could alight, and then Edward got the luggage taken down the long, steep breakneck stairs which led to the street, and as cabs were then quite unknown in Grasaig, at least unless specially hired and waited for, they proceeded up the street followed by the porter with the baggage. It was a true Grasaig night, and one which was not calculated to give the strangers any very high opinion of the town or its climate. Rain was falling heavily and persistently, and the passengers on the streets presented strange appearances to the farmer's wife, wrapped up as they were in macintoshes and oilskins of various colours. The shops looked dim and gloomy,

and one could not help thinking that the native writer who maintained that all the children born in the town were, like the ducks, webfooted must be correct. Mrs. Arnold, however, besides being too anxious to be with her son, was too much fatigued with travel, and confused by the rattle and shaking of the railway, to notice or heed much the appearance of men or things around her. Her companion was more accustomed to strange places and to travel, and therefore took things much more coolly —so coolly indeed that Mrs. Arnold had wondered, and been almost angry, at his nonchalance during the journey.

Mrs. Archbold was waiting to receive and welcome John's mother. But Mrs. Arnold, when she came, could hardly speak either to her or Annie, who looked with some confusion and dismay on them all, and very much to Edward's surprise scarcely spoke. The mother must see her son at once, she had no time to dally, and therefore, while Mrs. Archbold detained the minister and her own son, Annie went with Marion and her mother to John. Annie was hardly conscious of what she



was doing, and had no thought of whether it was proper or not. It was, as might have been expected, an affecting meeting ; Mrs. Arnold had been prepared for the worst, then encouraged to hope that John was much better ; but now coming and finding him lying stretched out there on the sofa so helpless, with his head bandaged and his body almost immovable—him, the strong man, so feeble-looking, overcame her entirely, and she forgot all the composure and philosophy she had been teaching herself ; the calmness she was to maintain was blown to the winds, and nature and natural grief claimed their way and forced their own course.

“ My John ! my boy ! ” she cried, grasping his hand ; but for the moment she could say no more, she burst into a passion of tears, lifting up her voice and weeping as the sad reality presented itself to her gaze. Annie was beside her, weeping too, and her mother turned to her, thinking she was Marion ; and casting herself into the chair which Annie had drawn forward, she drew the fair girl to her side as a screen, one would have thought, to shelter her grey

hairs from the gaze of strangers. While Annie stood thus with Mrs. Arnold's arms round her waist, and her head hidden in her bosom, she could not resist the impulse to put her own arms round John's mother, and kiss affectionately the aged wrinkled brow which quivered under this heart agony for a time. John was affected too, but much more delighted — ungrateful fellow that he was—to see Annie in the daughter's place, and by his looks he plainly enough expressed his satisfaction, to Marion's great astonishment, who could not conceive what he could find pleasing in her mother's sorrow, nor yet understand how Annie came to be in the place she then occupied. John allowed his mother's passionate grief to exhaust itself, which after awhile it did, then he said :

“Dear mother, don't be so distressed, the worst is over now with me, thank God, and the kind nurses I have had! Please the Almighty, I shall soon be well again. Look up, mother, and you'll see what you've little thought of seeing.”

Mrs. Arnold did look up, still feeling the arms of her daughter, as she fancied, em-

bracing her ; and it was with no little surprise, and even shame, that she saw it was Annie—the stranger—she had in her arms. She was about to apologise for the trouble or annoyance she had given Miss Archbold, but Annie did not loose her hold, and John continued—

“No, no, mother, don’t say anything, for you couldn’t say half enough to tell the good that Annie’s done me. Mother, you have another daughter to-night ; Marion has a true sister now, thanks be to God and Annie !”

“Bless me, my bairn, what mean ye ?” Mrs. Arnold was startled out of her tears now.

“Just what I say ; this dear girl you have in your arms is mine, my Annie henceforth, and your daughter ; I feel quite a new man now, mother, blessings be upon her for it !”

“Ay, and my blessin’ too,” Mrs. Arnold said, as she realised John’s meaning. “The blessin’ o’ an awd woman like me, isna muckle worth mayhap, but ony way it’s yours, my darlin’.”

Mrs. Arnold now embraced in hearty,

fashion the blushing Annie, and kissed her lips, and cheeks, and brow no longer as a substitute for, but as her daughter, newly found it is true, but very dear; and for a time she seemed even to forget her wounded son in the surprise and joy of this discovery. She held the blushing girl at arm's length too, and examined the beautiful intellectual face, now glowing with bashfulness and shame under the scrutiny; then patting her cheek with her withered hand, she said solemnly, as she let her go, nodding her head emphatically as she spoke:

"Yes, the guid Lord bless thee, darlin', and be wi' thee, for your ain sake, as weel as his that's rejoicin' in the kindness ye ha'e shown him."

Annie was glad to be able to turn away her blushing face, but it was only to meet the eyes of Marion looking most sympathetically into her own. Marion saw at once what must have happened, and drew Annie to one side, and joked, actually joked, in the room of the hurt man too, about the pleasant employment Annie must have been engaged in, as witnessed by the dis-

covery they had just made. Marion remembered a passage of the same kind in her own life, and her mother's only very qualified approval thereof, when she told of Harry Grey's declaration; but as Mrs. Arnold herself would have said, "Circumstances alter cases," and even Marion could not but see that this was a very different case from hers. Marion had no jealous nor envious feelings however in regard to Annie, and could scarcely by any means make more manifest her sisterly feelings than she had already done; for what sister could have sustained her more thoroughly, during these past days of trial than Annie Archbold had done.

After a time Mrs. Arnold was led away to change her dress, and then to tea, and it was Annie, not Marion, who accompanied her, and showed her all the attention, while she rendered all the service that a daughter could lavish on her. Mrs. Arnold felt her feelings brimming over, and could have sat down every minute or two to caress the beautiful girl. Yet she was half afraid of Annie too; she was not one of their own folk, and the old lady did not know the ways of

such girls as she; so Mrs. Arnold was almost timid in expressing her pleasure and joy, in case she should say something which would not be proper to the town-bred, and therefore much more fastidious girl. Ah! Mrs. Arnold did not know, at least did not remember, that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and that Annie Archbold at that moment did not think of homely phrases, or Northumbrian forms of expression, but of the true warm-hearted affection which gleamed so brightly through them all.

Marion spoke more freely to John of her delight, and yet at the same time of her fear lest these successive scenes should agitate him too much. John scouted the idea; he felt greatly better, quite a new man in fact, within the hour.

"Yes, I daresay you feel all that, John, just now, but to-morrow how will it be, how is it likely to be? Your pulse is quicker already. You must keep quiet now for the rest of the night."

"Oh! nonsense, Marion. It's natural enough, isn't it, that my pulse should be quicker, all things considered; but let me

get all over, and then to rest as I best may, and to mend with speed, how long, long it will seem till I get out again to work—

“As ne’er was known before.”

Go now and send Edward to me, there’s a dear lassie.”

“You’ll just ruin yourself, John; I’ll be quite afraid of to-morrow now, indeed I shall.”

“Won’t it only be right, and best too, to get all over then? And I must see the young priest too. How thoughtful and considerate of him to come with our mother! Very few men, Marion, would have done that, would even have thought of offering to do it indeed.”

“Say rather very few men could have done it, and you would be much more correct. A man that has his time so much at his own disposal can do many things that others would have been willing enough to do, but could not.”

Marion had coloured violently at the mention of the young minister, and rose hastily as she spoke, and began to put

things in order in the room, John thought as much to prevent him seeing the ruddy glow which did not all at once pass away, as to put the room in order. For Marion herself—though she would not acknowledge that Mr. Johnson's coming was anything more than common—thought very highly of the attention, from whatever cause it had arisen.

"Well, never mind, all these things 'll do very well, Marion; do tell Edward I would like to see him for a few minutes, and Mr. Johnson too, if he will come. Then you'll have to make some arrangement about accommodation. Perhaps Edward will do that; yes, Edward will, I know."

"Well, John, it must only be for a minute or two, mind, and I'll not allow any more visits to-night. You'll have to pass it all alone; not *one* more, mind."

"Oh, yes, I know, but we'll see about that by and by, and mind you've not the command in chief now. The commander now is mother, *vice* sister superseded."

"Ay, ay, I thought it would have been somebody else than mother *vice* sister—it'll be *vice* us both next, John, that it will."

"Well, perhaps; but there's a dear lassie, tell them to come now."

"Take care then, and only for five minutes, mind."

Marion went out of the room smiling for the first time these weary, dreary days, and could almost have burst into a snatch of song as in the old time at Outchester, but for the fear of what they would think. It was so joyful and hopeful to see such a change on John's spirits, if this excitement did not throw him back. However, she sent the two young men to see him, and Edward, already somewhat nonplussed at Annie's silence, shyness, and the tremulous way she hangs about the Northumbrian matron, is much more so still, but perhaps now with a faint glimmering of the cause, at the way in which John takes and presses his hand, for there is something in this pressure more than usual. Mr. Johnson, of course, sees nothing but the stricken man, and compassionately sympathising with him, perhaps imputes his cheerfulness to his mother's having come, or perhaps to his anxiety not to alarm them overmuch. Mr. Johnson is mindful of the

admonition not to stay, and soon withdraws; perhaps the giver of that admonition has some share in that too; but John retains Edward, and in a few words, hardly needed, tells him of his bliss, and asks his confirmation, approval, or his congratulations, whichever it is like to be. Edward does warmly approve and cordially congratulate; but he is not so much surprised now at anything as at the strange time John has chosen.

“I could not resist,” John said; “I felt impelled to speak, to ask the dear lassie; and in this old book I’ve been reading—I wonder where it came from, or how it came to my hands here—I read:

“‘He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.’

and so I have in this particular ventured all, and gained, not lost, all, as you may see.”

“Verily, you’re a happy fellow, and a lucky one too, broken bones and all; I’d stand such a knock for a like chance this very night.”

"No, no, Edward, no need: like enough this blessedness would have come to me without the broken bones, only I should have been stronger, and abler to restrain myself and to wait. Do you mind the first night we met, Ned?"

"Yes, quite well. Heigh ho! how long ago that is, or seems to be now, to be sure."

"And what you said to me as we walked down the Parade together?"

"No, I don't remember anything we spoke of that night, not particularly any way, what was it?"

"Only this, Ned, that perhaps I should fall in with somebody,—perhaps I should meet somebody. Ah! so I did, and so I have in truth. God bless her!"

"So be it, John; but you have a better memory than I have. I forgot all about that. But I must leave you, or I shall have eyes of both colours flashing upon me anything rather than approval. Now you make haste and get well, that we may let them see what we 'knobs' can do, broken bones and broken hearts and all."

"Truly I will, Ned; indeed I mean to.

Patience for a little yet, though, I fancy. How are you getting on?——”

“Oh, very well,” Ned said hastily, as if afraid John was about to touch upon past times and circumstances. “Nothing at all new that I’ve heard, save a rumour that your plaid has been caught in Glasgow round the shoulders of a rascal the officer spoke of to me as *the foutre*.”

“The right one, do you think?” John asked eagerly.

“Yes, I rather think so; but really I must stop now. No, I won’t answer another question. I’ve a good mind to lock the door, and keep everybody out for the rest of the night—especially somebody—what would you say to that?”

“Try it, you’d find how powerless you were.”

Edward went away, leaving John to his own thoughts, which, in spite of his pain, were pleasant and cheerful enough, as they should have been.

CHAPTER IX.

CONFIDENCES.

NEITHER Mrs. Archbold nor Mrs. Arnold alluded to the discovery which each of them had made that night. Indeed the remainder of it had to be employed in devising ways and means for the accommodation of the travellers, and then Mrs. Arnold could not be long absent from her son. It was arranged that, for that night at least, Annie should stay with Marion as before, but that Mr. Johnson should go home with Mrs. Archbold and Edward. As soon then as the surgeon had paid his last visit, when he was considerably surprised to find the quickened pulse, yet the healthy feeling of the skin, and the cheerful spirit of his patient, and had given a moderately favourable report, they prepared to take their departure. Of course there had been a good

deal of by-play between the young people, and Mr. Johnson, at first rather jealous at the knowing glances which passed, and the good understanding which seemed to subsist, between Marion and Edward, who appeared brimming over with some secret, and rather astonished at the shyness of the other pretty girl, who seemed to be the butt of both and to shrink from their looks, at last began to surmise what the true state of the case was. His idea was confirmed by a whisper from Mrs. Arnold when Annie was out of the room, and he also began to look with a conscious interest at her when she returned. Admiring Marion as much as he did, he could not help at the same time acknowledging to himself how very beautiful Annie was, and therefore he highly applauded John's taste. Little doubt is there that he would have applauded the taste of Edward too, had Maggie Barnard appeared that night in the same happy position, and Ned, thus out of the way and pale of rivalry, had left him a clear field and opportunity to win Marion. As it was, the young minister could only hope against hope, and watch that sweet face in all the variations



of its expression, from grave to gay, from lively to severe, as her thoughts passed from her wounded brother to Annie, from the happiness of this night to the misery of that other night when John was brought home so badly hurt and mangled.

They separated for the night. Mrs. Archbold would have insisted that Marion's mother should go with them, since her services would not be required, and she evidently was greatly worn out with the long and most unusual journey; but Mrs. Arnold, though she could do no good, would not leave her son; she must be near him, whether she could be of use or not, and so Mrs. Archbold and the young men went away. Since John's injury they had been like members of one family, passing the whole of the day together, and to-morrow anyway would see no change in their habits. There was more of the true family spirit among them than one often finds existing in those of the same blood and lineage, and now a more intimate bond seemed about to be formed, drawing them closer and binding them faster than ever. This was felt by Mrs. Arnold, and especially by the two

girls when they were left alone. John was now in a deep sleep, wearied out by the exciting scenes through which he had passed, but not to all appearance in the least injured by them, to Annie's great satisfaction. Annie had stolen in to bid him good night when her mother went away, and had found him resting quietly, with a moisture cool and pleasant on his brow and his breathing calm and regular, while the nurse the doctor had insisted on getting was already at her post. They could draw round the fire therefore and converse quietly of that terrible night on which he was hurt. Of course the mother was anxious to hear all that concerned her son, and, like a farmer's wife from the wilds of Northumberland, was most desirous to hear the most minute particulars of the event, and so far as they could the girls gratified the motherly anxiety and curiosity. Both could tell what they had seen and felt, but Annie, who had seen him lying on the very spot where the deed had been done, of course took most of the old lady's attention.

"I dinna ken, hinny, how I can thank you a' for your kindness to my bairns,"



Mrs. Arnold said at last. "'Deed I'm very glad things ha'e ta'en the turn they've done, for nought that we could ha'e done, or said, would ha' told what we a' feel. Yes, my dear lassie, I'm very glad, mair than I can say, for John mayhap 'll be able better than me to prove we're no unthankfu'."

"Oh don't speak so; don't, dear Mrs. Arnold. Who could that knew Marion have done otherwise," Annie answered.

"Ay, mother, though you wouldn't believe it, who knew John too," Marion spoke silyly. "Don't blush, Annie darling, I don't mean to tease you at all, but the news of this night is the blythest I've heard for many a day, and I feel quite gay."

"Truly, so it is. Ay, hinny, I dinna ken, ye'll think us queer folk in the East Country among the Fells, and we're no like you at a', but my lad has mair o' th' town about him than we ha'e, and he'll be better able than the like o' me to let you ken a' we think."

Annie was sitting on a stool at Mrs. Arnold's feet, a position which Marion had often taken when at home, but assumed by Annie to-night quite unconsciously, perhaps

so as to be the better able to hide the face which burned with blushes every now and then. Marion had closed in on the other side of Annie, so that she was fixed there as if the adopted of both. It was a very pretty sight, the old, comely, motherly country woman, the fair-delicate, looking country flower, both closing round and caressing that graceful head. And a strange position too it was in which to find Annie Archbold, and one which those only who knew her best could understand her in adopting. True love is ever humble, though in these days people seem to fancy that it should not manifest itself to any but the one object; yet when deep and genuine it will embrace all more or less intensely, and find amiabilities in those who stand as that mother and daughter did, so near and dear to the chief who was now enthroned as sovereign in the heart. Mrs. Arnold was now and again smoothing the long silky hair, which, having burst its bands, had streamed down upon her knee; and Marion had taken possession of one of the hands, which she had caught wandering through the black silky masses.



"To think o' my son," Mrs. Arnold continued, "having such fortune as to fa' in wi' one like you, hinny, beats me a'thegither. When your brother, Mr. Edward, was at Outchester, he was far liker one o' oursels than ought else, and we liked him dearly, but I ne'er thought o' onything like this, and, my darlin' hinny, I canna tell ye how pleased we'll a' be at it."

"Father," Marion said, "what did he think or say when ye came away, mother?"

"No muckle, he was over concerned to say muckle, but he'll come if there be need. A proud man he'll be too at finding such a sister as ye've gotten, Marion dear; but I maun ha'e him telled the morn about it a'. Puir man, he'll be in an awfu' state about John before now, I judge."

"Oh no, he needn't be that; Marion has written every day, I know," Annie said, just to keep her place in the conversation, as it seemed. Mrs. Arnold's hands were busied twining the long locks about her withered fingers, and it was very pleasant to feel them so engaged.

"Yes, mother, I wrote both yesterday and to-day again, so that he'll not need to

be so anxious," Marion said. "Unless it be about you, he has no cause now, or very little anyway; but, mother, such a letter as you'll have to write to him! There was never news like it sent to Outchester in your time, I'm quite sure."

"Me write! lassie, ye're daft. I telled ye once before that I ne'er got a letter from your father but one, and I'm very sure I ne'er wrote him ony. I would rather write to a hunder ither folk than to him."

Annie looked up quickly in a little surprise. She had no proper idea yet of how primitive in her notions Mrs. Arnold was in many things, and she had seen and read the sensible motherly letters which she had written to Marion.

"You think that strange, hinny, dinna ye?" Mrs. Arnold said, "and so it would be in thir days; but you see, when we were young folk, hardly onybody wrote letters, at least o' our kind o' folk, and I ne'er had aught to do wi' friends at a distance; then Francis and me ha'e ne'er been separate as lang as the noo, but once for more than than thirty years. I would think shame,

and no ken how to speak to him even if I tried."

"It's a great thing to be able to say that. More than thirty years, and never away from each other—it's a good long lifetime," Annie murmured.

"Indeed it is, hinny; and then us country folk ne'er thought o' writing if we could send word in anither way. Now that's a' altered, and it's a great comfort to hear sae often and sae easy. Na, na, Marion 'll have to write; besides that she can say things better than I could do."

"Very well, mother, but for the very novelty you might try and do it this once. You'll put a postscript to mine anyway."

"Yes, I may do that. Now I've been thinkin' o' a plan a' the night since I saw the puir lad, that 'll do you a' good; we maun ha'e my boy taken hame as soon as he can travel, and you, hinny, maun gang hame wi' me, and stop and see our country life and get better acquainted wi' us a' than ever could come about in the town here."

"Oh! but he'll rebel against that," Annie said, "he is so full of his invention, and eager to be about again."

"So he is," Marion said; "but yes, mother, Annie must go with us. Oh! it will be so pleasant for us all, and after all what is an invention when compared with his health."

"Ay, what indeed," Annie murmured.

"Everything maun stand, if need be, and be put aside; but even his best friends here, in the working way, I mean, will be glad to get him away for a while. He'll only come back the sooner and the stronger to them wi' the hammers and the files and such like things. A walk up the water side will do him mair guid than a week here."

"No doubt about that, mother; it would quite set him up afresh again."

"And you, my darlin' lassie, you and your mother ye maun baith come — now dinna say a word, for a' body obeys me at hame. Ye maun gang hame wi' us, we ha'e plenty o' room in th' awd house, and the fine spring weather is comin' on, it'll put new life into ye too. Marion, my dear, I forgot, there's some flowers frae the garden in the box, I quite forgot a' about them."

Flowers from Outchester were something not every day to be had in Grasaig. Marion

hastened to get them, while Mrs. Arnold continued to speak of her son, and of getting them all home with her. Her plan was a very simple and easy one, if everybody was agreeable. Edward should be left alone for a while and all the rest should migrate to the old Roman station. Then when John was well enough to come back to Grasaig, the two young men should stay together, and Mrs. Arnold and Annie remain with them at Outchester, till they got tired of the country—at least they should stay during the fine weather. Annie listened attentively and eagerly. For a time this would be very pleasant, but she had by far too little knowledge of the country to know in how far it would be so. Walks up Hetton side, and amid the rocky dells and fragrant meadows, sounded very pleasant — would they be so in reality? — and above all what would her mother and Ned say about it? But Marion returned with the delicate flowers, a little withered it is true, rather from being crushed up in paper than the weather, for there was the entire bush just as the spade had taken it up, earth and all; it might last for days, and send

forth new flowers yet. Like Mrs. Arnold's hopes as she drew near Grasaig, these sweet flowers were crushed and tarnished, but the hopes had brightened, and new ones were burgeoning, destined to bloom and flourish and make them all yet to rejoice; so also did it promise to be with Marion's flowers.

CHAP. X.

SOME REMAINING EFFECTS OF THE STRIKE.

THE police detectives, in their second cast to find the scent of the villains who had almost murdered and wholly robbed John Arnold, were more successful than they had been in their first inquisitions. Mere general suspicion of a class, or even of characters otherwise suspicious for the reason that they belong to that class, is perhaps natural enough when class outrages abound or have been committed, but very seldom results in conviction — however much unhappiness it may create, or how many soever people may be arrested, or even tried. Witness the failures so common in cases of Ribbon outrages and murders, and the difficulties which are constantly experienced in these cases of inducing witnesses to come forward to testify against the criminals. Indeed,

unless an approver can be found, unless one of the class accused becomes a traitor, it seems in many cases scarcely possible for the police to go on, or even to find the true trail, much less to procure a conviction, though there should be no moral doubt as to those who are guilty. Everybody knows how deservedly such evidence—the evidence of people traitors to their fellows—is regarded with suspicion. So long, therefore, as the police of Grasaig looked among the engineers of the town, they not only failed of finding the clue, but they were met at every step by such baffling circumstances that they could do nothing—they were completely foiled. The description which John gave of his chief assailant, made more full and definite by Edward Archbold, set them to the search again with fresh vigour and in another direction, and before the first day was over, they had discovered that a man having such a “kenspeckle” hand, had been in the town on the day before; that he had been in company with certain others, one or two of whom were natives of Grasaig; and that they had been at the

meeting in the old church, which John and Edward had attended; but now all these birds had flown, or were so closely hid that they could not at once be discovered. Then there came the information, that by some means a man corresponding to the description given, had obtained an interview with Peacham in the County Jail, and had been there especially noted by the warders, but whither he had gone, or what had become of the men suspected of being his companions or accomplices in the deed, had yet to be found out.

The Engineer Committee had printed and placarded a declaration of their abhorrence of the deed, and both by the police and by the authorities were exonerated, but the stigma, the disgrace, yet remained. The inhabitants of the town were not so easily convinced by a mere *ex parte* statement, and were very much disposed to blame and murmur at the Committee, who had kept the men so long out of work and wages, and so had deprived the town of several thousand pounds a week. The people therefore broke out into open revilings of the strike leaders and de-

nunciations of their conduct in the past, and more especially as to this diabolical deed, the guilt of which even the promised return of the men to work did not lessen. The Committee as a committee were perfectly innocent of any complicity in the dastardly affair; whether all the members were so was not so clear; certainly none of them were at all guilty of participation actually in the crime itself, nor would even those who did not think it wrong in itself to terrify or even thrash a "knob" have sanctioned such a brutal outrage, far less the robbery which had been added to it. The latter act was felt by them all far more keenly than the assault was, or would have been even had it resulted fatally. It was so mean, and brought such disgrace upon them. But neither as a Committee, nor as individuals, did they render any help to the officers of police. The vast majority of the Engineers could render none, and, heartily as they disapproved and condemned, would rather have screened the offenders, so far as they were their own men, as much as they could, than have betrayed them. The

Committee, though guiltless of intention, were yet very far from being comfortable, for they were guilty of bringing about that state of enmity out of which this deed had sprung. They had broken the dyke, and were therefore morally responsible, in so far, for the outburst of the waters and the calamities which followed.

Blair and Thomson had been taken on again, Mr. Morton having been informed how well they had behaved; and besides, having known the men all his life, he treated them kindly. Mr. Morton's Engine Works stood deservedly at the top of the Foundries of Grasaig, and the men, eager for work after such a long time of enforced idleness, flocked to the yard, when the blockade was raised, to seek employment. The strike, however, had in many cases revealed the true character of the men, so the foremen did not engage people at mere haphazard. They took advantage of the time, and picked their men. Many there were, therefore, who had left this work, who did not get employed again now, to their great dismay, which was not at all lessened when they found that a similar

plan was adopted by the other employers. The most confident speakers, the best agitators, are by no means certainly the best workmen, and whether it was intended to exclude them as ringleaders, or only as indifferent workmen, it is certain that, with a few marked exceptions, the leaders in Committees and Strike meetings were generally passed over. Rather a startling fact this, for these men, many of them, doubtless, would now have desired to prolong the Strike if they could have done so. A very natural proceeding, too, was this on the part of the employers. Why should it seem wonderful that they should prefer quiet, steady men to demagogues, as many of these leaders were? But the men were so eager for the good work, had suffered so much during this idle time, and saw so little prospect of any advantage to be gained by further idleness, that the leaders would have been left entirely alone had they made any further attempt to prolong the struggle. So the famous Strike at Grasaig was snuffed out, not having produced the effects anticipated by the men after its

continuance for so many weeks, and the endurance of so many hardships, during the bitter winter weather, by so many people. Its results did not so easily pass away, and even the return to employment of the Engineers only partly mitigated the general distress at first. Besides the distrust engendered, besides the bitter feeling of animosity between classes which had arisen, there was much suffering concealed from view, of which the general public little knew. Wives whose husbands had gone away, leaving them and their children destitute, or nearly so, till the men could get work elsewhere; widowed mothers, left by their sons often in as deplorable circumstances, who suffered greatly, and would have died rather than make a sign of their misery, had they not been found out by the hard-working town missionary and the district visitor, who did their best to relieve and succour the distressed. Add to all these, the much greater uncertainty as to the continuance of work than before. Orders had been taken to other places, and purchasers of engines did not care to entrust the manu-

facture of their vessels or the engines to those who had to run the risk of being pulled up so suddenly. Very wrong-headed this of the great Steam Packet Companies, but true nevertheless. The history of strikes will tell many stories of the stoppage, either partial or entire, of particular trades and manufactures as a direct result of such strikes in particular districts.

John had visitors in the evening of the day following the arrival of his mother and Mr. Johnson. Craigie, the old temperance man, came to see how he was getting on, and while he was there the inseparable companions, Thomson and Blair, made their appearance also. All the three had frequently called during these past days, but only now, when the fear of fever had passed away, were they permitted to see him. As might have been expected, the whole day had been a pleasant one to John Arnold, and well it might be, considering the nurses he had. His mother and Marion waiting anxiously to anticipate his every wish, and dearer than them both, Annie Archbold, who now could sit by

his side, and read to him or tend him, and that without any "drither" as to whether it was right or wrong. All the womankind gave place to his visitors, however, except an occasional glance in by one of the girls to see if he needed anything. The women had plenty to engage them; Mrs. Arnold had made a convert of Annie to her scheme of carrying them all off to Northumberland as soon as possible, and Mrs. Archbold was wavering; but Edward was still most vehement in opposition — this would carry away Marion—and though he did not bring that forward, his sister very well understood what was the most powerful reason of his opposition. Engaged, therefore, in the effort to bring all persons concerned to an agreement on this point, John was left alone to receive these men.

"Oh John, man, it does ane guid to see ye sae muckle better, I'd nae notion ye'd been able to speak to ony o' us for days to come," Craigie said, as he shook hands with the hurt man.

"I am very glad to see you, Craigie,

very glad indeed, but it 'll be a long while, I fear me, before I'll be myself again."

"Ay, I daresay, but its a blessin' ye are in the way o' mendin'. Ye'll ha'e heard a' the news o' the shop, I reckon, from Mr. Archbold? So there's little I can tell ye mair than that a' thing's gaen on very weel noo."

"Ned's too much engaged with metal more attractive just now to be much with me," John answered. "He does tell me something every day of your progress, but it's only very lately the doctor would allow him or anybody to speak to me of what had happened. Do tell me, have the men all come back?"

"As mony o' them as is wanted i' the noo ony way, Mr. Morton wasna siccana fuil as just to take on a' comers; na, na, the foremen made a pick o' the men, and waled out the best and steadiest han's. It's my opinion, muckle guid as that 'll dae, they nicht ha'e gaen a wee hue farther, mony a ane during the strike has been weighed in the balance an'

fund wantin' that were a' just enough weight before — or thocht sae, which is about the same."

"How do you mean, Craigie?"

"Ou just in this way. When they had the pick and chusin' of the new hands I'd a made sure o' a' the soberest, steadiest men; the foremen ha'e dune no that ill, no that ill, indeed, considerin', but they micht ha'e dune better still. Ye'll no fin' the real sober man carried awa' wi' nonsense things as the ither lads wha tak' a dram — the heavier the dram the mair fuilish the man."

"Oh, you would have them all to be teetotallers, I see. Well, I do believe you're right enough in that; steady men are often of more value to the masters than clever ones."

"Aye, John, aye, and no to the maister alone, but to the folk tae, and to themsels maist principal o' a'. But it's surely no true that drink had ocht to dae wi' you yon nicht. I dinna believe it, min' you, but I've heard it said sae."

John was a little nettled at this, for, besides being untrue, it was the most

contrary thing in the world to his habits. He did not think how eagerly any subterfuge would be seized in the effort to excuse or screen the guilty men.

"It's too bad," he said, "to say anything of the kind. I need not answer even you, Craigie, on such a point, but I would hardly have believed that anybody — even of the men on strike — would have been so wicked as to say that."

"Ay, but they have though, only I kenned better. Nae doubt, nae doubt, the rash lads that did it were nae soberer than they sould be. I canna and winna believe that ony ane o' our ain men in their sober senses would ha'e dune siccana thing."

"I can't say for that. The only one I could fairly see had been drinking, out of all doubt; but it was not drink that set him on, though it might make him more savage."

"That'll be him they're to bring down the nicht. Sodgers, and the specials, are to be out when he comes. No that there's need for siccana fuss now, but like everybody else our magistrates are

grand hands at lockin' the stable door after the steed's sto'en."

"Have they really got hold of that fellow? Edward said something about it, but I quite forget what it was."

"Ay, he's catched sure enough, the *foutre* that he is, an' he'll be here the night."

Thomson and Blair entered the room while Craigie was speaking, and after the little bustle attendant on their coming was over Craigie proceeded —

"Yer twa repentant lads here'll tell ye, if they ken ocht about him, or his foul tricks."

"Na, na," Thomson answered eagerly, "he's no ane o' our folk be a' I can hear; but it's too bad o' ye, Craigie, to fancy we'd ken ocht about the like o' him. Ye're far ower hard on us, Craigie."

"Ne'er a bit, I could excuse amaisht ony ither in the foundry, but the like o' you twa, that should ha'e kent better. Ony way the word gangs that this man — what's his name? I dinna mind — is to be brocht down frae Glasgow the nicht."

"His name's Palmer," Blair said. "He's

no kent here awa', at least there's nane I ken 'that e'er heard tell o' him afore the noo. But ye surely dinna believe ony o' us had ado wi' that bad business, Arnold, do ye?"

"No, some of them, mad for the moment, might perhaps have done such a thing, but of set purpose, no, I can't believe that, and I am sure there was a regular plot and plan in it."

"Now, God bless ye for that word," Thomson said. "I fear there have been some geyan near mad wi' the cauld, and the hunger tae, for it's been a terrible time for mony a ane, but I canna free a' our ain folk either."

"Na, na, best no try, least said 's sunest mended," said Craigie hastily, as if to stop any farther speculations of the other men. "Some ha'e doubtless been that far left to theirsels, an' a bonny job they've made o't, it maun e'en be allowed. But I'll ne'er believe that they werena putten up till it; it 'ud ne'er a-come into ony o' their thochtless heads else."

"I blame no one but that man," John

said, "and him, or anyone else, I never injured. But it's a dreadful state of things when our own fellow-craftsmen turn against us even in a strike. If they claim freedom to play, why blame me while using just the same freedom to work?"

"Eh, that's true enough, I ne'er thocht o' that view o' the thing before," Blair cried; "however, it'll no be my faut gin there be ony mair o' this kind o' wark for years an' years."

"Wise ahint the han', like a' the rest," Craigie said. "Noo, an' ye had keepit the society just an even down friendly one, and to help the lads out o' work, an' even to remonstrate wi' the maisters now and again if they did ocht that wasna richt, an' no let them trample on the workmen even fit furrard, as some o' them heedna doin', I'd abeen a member, and wad be once more, and sae would the maist o' us; but ga'en on as ye did wasna for the benefit o' the fair eydent worker at a', an' ye could expect nocht but mischief to come o't."

"So it has, and there's nane mair sorry

nor Sandy Thomson an' mysel, but we did a' for the best," Blair answered.

"Ou ay, I dinna misdoubt that, but now suppose ye'd gotten what ye askit for, what guid wad it ha'e dune tae men like yer ainsels? No ae haet ye'd neither ha'e gotten better wages nor mair comfort in the shop, an' a' the lazy louns an' halfin callants new dune wi' their time 'ud been paid the same as ye, wha'd ha'e to dae the maist feek o' the wark, an' a' the kittly bits o't? Now set them an' the like o' you to work by the piece, suppose, an' they got just what they work for, an' nae mair, which is fair to a'; if ye can dae twice the wark, wherefore sould ye no get twice the pay, I'd like to ken, an' gin ye're able an' it pleases ye to work aught days a week, it's yer ain wull to do it, or no; why sould ye no ha'e the chance?"

John, however much at another time he might have relished this argument, did not care for it now, when Craigie had it all his own way. The other two smarted yet under their disappointed expectations,

and to relieve them from Craigie's logic John interposed —

“But you were saying something, Craigie, about the fellow having been apprehended; how about him?”

“Ou no muckle. Had they thrown him ower Glasgow Brigg into Clyde, it would ha'e been ower guid for him; but they're bringing him down here, an' ance ye're able to appear, ye'll ha'e to bear witness again' him. Before then there 'll be mair ta'en up, I jealouse, for the officers say — I saw ane o' them the day — that he'll squeeze, an' they'll get out o' him wha was wi' him, an' wha put him up to 't.”

“I hope not, I most earnestly hope not. It 'll do no good, and only make the men more savage, though the strike is over. If I could I'd willingly keep away even from appearing against him.”

“But that canna be. For the sake o' the Society itsel', it maun be gaen through wi' noo he's caught,” Blair said.

“Ay, noo he's caught, he maun be punished, an' nae thanks to ye. I dinna blame ye, Robbie Blair, or Sandy Thomson, I ken ye wouldna dae ony siccan thing; but

ye canna touch pitch but it 'll stick to yer fingers, nor play wi' edge tools without the risk o' gettin' a cut, an' sae yer committee having stirred up the stour, maun expect to catch the dust as it fa's. But we maun gang; we are just wearyin' out Arnold now. I hope ye may sune be out again, John, an' amang us ance mair — guid nicht."

The other men said good-bye, and departed with him, leaving John indeed a little wearied, but that weariness soon disappeared when Annie and Marion entered the room to resume their duties.

CHAPTER XI.

ANNIE AND MRS. ARNOLD.

"Now, hinny, that a' are content, even to the doctor, we'll get away frae this smoky town, and amang the fresh, free air o' the hills, ye'll sune get back the bonnie bloom to your cheeks again."

"But I don't think I've ever lost it. Marion may have; but I've not, surely, Mrs. Arnold," Annie answered.

"Nae matter. Ye knowna what the spring fields and the spring flowers 'll do. Marion, puir lassie, 'll be a' the better of gaen hame too. No but she's the better o' comin' here, and it was a great mercy she did come, and was here when the misfortune happened; I'll ever think sae. Thae weary letters that dinna come vexed her anoo before; but when ye're wi' her there 'll be no sae muckle to fear frae them, or rather the want o' them."

"I hope so; but, dear Mrs. Arnold, won't Mr. Johnson vex her just as much as she was vexed before? — and I fancied that he was the chief cause of her trouble—his attentions, rather."

"I dinna knaw. She's but a spoiled bairn, and has been sae a' her days, what wi' her father, and mysel', and the lads. She oughtna be vexed at the wooin' o' a lad like Mr. Johnson; but I'll tak care he dinna fash her mair. If she were only fairly off or on wi' that lad, I wadna heed sae muckle; but it's sic a whether or no business that I canna mak ought o' it—him at the ae end o' the world and her at the tither."

"But you see all his letters, and know exactly how things stand; and I'm sure he writes affectionately enough, does he not?"

"Truly, he did; but what for does he no come hame, or send sure word, and no keep the lassie — my ain bairn tae — hingin' on that way."

"It would be much pleasanter, no doubt; but it's perhaps not so easy to come, even if he desired it ever so much. Indeed, dear Mrs. Arnold, while I wish nothing

but the greatest good to Marion, I fancy this affair is a very great pity."

"Bless you, hinny, so it is a' that: I've aye thought sae. But he was a fine lad, and then Marion's been a spoiled lassie a' her days, so that she has aye dune as she likit wi' us a'. But only to think of how much better she might do if she only pleased. Oh! that weary sea, and they ships that gang on it, and keep folk in uncertainty sae lang."

"But Marion's not in uncertainty, is she?" Annie asked. "I have not noticed anything of the kind. She seems to me to be more cheerful, rather than duller, since she came here first, but for this fright, which gave her a great shake again."

"Ay, I dare say; but still she hasna heard for months frae that lad, and she should lang afore now; an' he bean't comin' hame, an' if he be, he should ha' written all the same."

"Yes; I know something about that. I wish he would appear in his own proper person, this Harry Grey, or in some way set free dear Marion from those other two."

"What other twa, hinny? Tell me. I

knew Mr. Johnson would gi'e ought for a kindly thought frae her; but wha's the ither, darling?"

"Oh, no less than my wise brother Ned. I can see him hovering about the dear lassie, and she has no thought of it in the least—I think not, any way."

"Guid sake! I hope not," Mrs. Arnold said hurriedly. "Bless me! to think of that now. No but she may be proud enough of it; but that she should leave hame, and come here to meet wi' just the like, it's just out o' the frying-pan into the fire. But I thought Mr. Edward had anither joe o' his ain."

"So he had; so he perhaps has; but never mind Ned. He's fallen out with the first; but I know them both well, they'll fall in again. Not that he's a light o' love either; but Marion's so very lovable, and Ned's just like tinder, easily set on fire. I must have Maggie set on him again, and while we're away they'll come to be all right, and as if there never had been such a thing as a cloud like this coming across their sky."

"If that weary lad would only come, or

if we knew he wasna comin' at all, 't'ud be a great mercy. But, hinny, ye'll be ready to start when the time comes?"

"Yes; I'm all ready now. But Marion 'll scold us for being so long. I wonder how they have got along while we have been away."

John and Marion had been left together while Mrs. Arnold had gone with Annie to see somewhat of the town, wholly strange and altogether wonderful to the old lady, now that her fears for her son were removed. To-morrow John was to be permitted by the doctor to go out again. To-morrow he was to appear at the court before the sheriff, to give evidence against the villain who had assaulted and robbed him; and the day following, if possible, they were to set out for Northumberland. John was as weak, very nearly, as a strong man can become. The bones had knit together again, and the suffering was gone; but he had got a shake which it would require weeks of careful nursing and the home atmosphere thoroughly to remove. He was still bandaged in every way; the long gash on his head could, however, be

clearly seen now under the strips of plaster, and a stranger looking on him for the first time, would have shuddered to see how fearful had been the wound, and how extensive, as testified by the surgical fastenings. Still, much as John needed the country air to restore his strength, and much the better as he would be of it, he was very unwilling to go away while he fancied his presence in the foundry was so important. Perhaps, like all inventors, he thought it more necessary than it really was, and that things could not go on, or be done right, unless done under his own eye, or by his own hand. All his thoughts, during these tedious days when alone, were devoted to calculations and plans; and more than once the doctor shook his head in grave reproof when he found his patient busy over drawings and sheets of figures, and prophesied evil as sure to come, if he did not give himself quiet and rest. Rest! as if, in such circumstances as his, the mind could really rest, with all, as he thought, dependent on the success of his plan, which his own presence would make certainly successful. At other times John relaxed,



and the hours flew past quickly with Annie, in those conversations which are so delightful, and which seem so foolish, which so engross the hearts of those engaged, and so amuse those who are merely hearers or on-lookers. But to-day John has had a long and serious conversation with his sister. Now that the time has nearly come for further and more certain word from Harry Grey both are very anxious, though Marion conceals her anxiety wonderfully well, and John tries to draw Marion out as to what she will do, or may think of doing, in the special circumstances. Will she be steadfast to her first resolution, should Harry make up his mind to stay in the East, or will she not rather put him out of her thoughts altogether, and forget or try to forget him? John would like much to know, but he cannot learn. Will the young priest have a chance after all?

Maggie Barnard has been brought out more favourably by this dreadful assault on John. She has been restored to the favour of Annie and Mrs. Archbold, and Ned has taken sundry walks home with her of late. Perhaps the pet into which she got when

he went away with John into Northumberland has passed away, and gone for ever. Perhaps the naval gallant was not a hero to her, or, what is likelier far than either, she knows and rejoices at the fact that they are all going away, and that Ned will be left very much at her mercy. Can it be that the sun of their horizon has been only obscured for a little, that the clouds are now clearing away, and that the sky for the future is about to become all the brighter for the contrast? Had Mr. Johnson stayed long—he has been back among the fells and hills for some time now—and given up hope of Marion, perhaps Maggie might have found a second adorer, to play off against Edward, for the young priest had been really much struck with the fair-haired beauty, who rejoiced in just such a complexion as did Marion, and yet differed so decidedly from her. She has come to see how John is getting on, and is with the brother and sister just now, while the others are absent. Maggie is conversing naturally and unaffectedly; no more trying to condescend to or to patronise Marion. Maggie Barnard has learned a lesson during



these few past months; and perhaps the misfortune which has befallen John, the sight of the gashed brow and bandaged arm, were better, more telling teachers of the dangers which had been avoided, and of her own selfishness in wishing Edward to stay in Grasaig, while the blood of the men was at fever-heat than anything else could have been; and Maggie shudders as she thinks that this, or even a worse fate, might have befallen Edward then, had he remained alone exposed to the danger of a meeting with men so savage and brutal.

"You have seen very little of the town," she was saying to Marion, when Mrs. Arnold and Annie returned, "and that little only at the worst time of the year; and then it has been so dreadfully interrupted that you'll be sure to carry away a bad account of us, now that you're going home again."

"Oh, no. I have found friends and formed friendships here," Marion said, "that are not at all likely to be broken or forgotten. I did not come expecting much pleasure, at least of the kind that's got away from home; and I've had plenty to

amuse me, and a great deal to instruct me too. No, I'll not easily forget Grasaig, wet and dirty as it is."

"Ay, it's even sae, Marion, my dear," her mother said. "Ye've found guid friends, and it was a blessin' ye cam. What ever would John ha'e dune—nae disparagement to your kindness, hinny." Mrs. Arnold patted Annie's dark tresses fondly as she spoke—"had ye no been here; and what would ye baith ha'e dune but for our kind friends."

"Truly, Mother, I think we'd better say nothing about that," said John: he saw that Annie did not seem to relish this. "But we'll all be among the hills in a day or two, and then you'll be able, Marion and you, to think better of Grasaig than you'll confess to here to-day. I'll have Marion back again, Miss Maggie, and my mother too, if all goes well."

Annie crimsoned violently under a sudden flush of colour, and Maggie Barnard looked confused, and as if she wouldn't mind pouting again. Did she expect Marion was going away for good, to leave

her a clear field? Maggie could not understand, either, the blushing of Annie Archbold; she did not know how matters stood between Annie and John.

"Ay, my son; and I'll be blythe enough to come. But what does the doctor say? No more peradventures, I hope; but we'll get away the day after to-morrow, without fail?"

"It all depends on the to-morrow itself," Marion said, "If John stands it well, all's well; if not, we must wait a day or two longer."

"All nonsense, Mother; there's no fear. I'll be as cool as possible; depend on that surely. A poor, contemptible villain like that Palmer won't have the chance to rouse me, I'm certain. What think you, Edward?"

"No need, any way; but you may be roused for all that. You're not given to nervousness, are you?"

"I should think not; do you know what nerves are, Mother? I don't think it; and I'm your own son."

Nevertheless, John was kept very quiet for the rest of that night; and while Edward was away with his quondam joe, John

had no greater trial to his nervousness than that of sitting with his arm about Annie, and conversing with her in tones so low that, had the room been full of people, she alone could have heard him.

CHAPTER XII.

CONVALESCENT.

THE ruffian Palmer had been remitted to the sheriff by the police magistrate of the town on the evidence of Edward and others, who swore to the plaid, and the watch, which the officers had found in a pawnbroker's in Glasgow, where he had pledged it; the charge of assault John alone could clearly substantiate. As the detectives had said, the man was an arrant coward, and a thorough traitor, quite willing, as it appeared, whether it would purchase his own safety or not, on the mere chance that it might be in his favour, to inform against his accomplices. The latter were chiefly townsmen of the fiercer sort, but otherwise not known bad characters, and really by no means so guilty as Palmer. Their intent had been to thrash and thoroughly

frighten John, and through him intimidate the other men; but neither dangerous bodily injury nor robbery had been part of their plot; therefore, when the whole town was stirred with the report of the cowardly deed, they had one by one made their escape—some to England, some to America, under assumed names, all the branches of the society furthering them in their efforts to escape. Perhaps even Palmer, the most guilty of the whole, would have got off also, but for the robbery and his drunken habits, which detained him near the spot, and brought him into contact with the police in Glasgow, as a disorderly person, before they had found out that he was wanted at Grasaig. It was a matter of no small gratification to John himself to find that only the principal was likely to be punished.

The next day, therefore, when the sheriff held his court, John Arnold appeared as a witness against Palmer. The watch and plaid—the one found upon him, the other in the place where he had pawned it—were produced in court, and John had not much more to do, than to swear that these articles

were his, and had been worn by him on the night the crime was committed, and then to give the same account of the event which Mr. Fiscal had taken down at first. The result was that Palmer was committed for trial,—a trial to come off a good many months hence, and was likely to stand alone at the bar, and be punished as he deserved for the deeds of that night. Palmer had not one to sympathise with him—not one to pity him. The chief leaders in the strike themselves, marked men as in present circumstances they had become, however much at another time they might have favoured him, were now perhaps the bitterest opponents he had. He was a traitor, and though there was no evidence, and there could be none, against them as a committee, he had criminated those who were intimately connected with them, and thrown a dark shadow of suspicion upon some who had been leaders. In fact, the assault itself at first, and now these repeated examinations and revelations, were the heaviest blows and greatest discouragements which their organisation could have received, inasmuch as they disgusted, not

only the townspeople, but the very members of their own and other kindred societies from which they had received help, with the strike, and especially with themselves as its conductors. "If such things were done in the green tree, what might not be done in the dry?" The dreadful proceedings in some of the neighbouring manufacturing towns, some few years before, were canvassed anew now; and the cause which resorted to such wickedness as assassination, in fact or intention,—men had actually been murdered during a strike, only a year or two before, in Glasgow, for no other reason than because they were "knobs,"—and the injuring of parties obnoxious to the turn-out, by throwing vitriol upon them, even a more horrid thing to think of, must, it was concluded, be a very bad one. In this, as in every other case, it was proved that it is the worst possible policy to do evil with the idea that good will come of it. Let the cause be ever so good, it will become bad if an attempt is intentionally made to bring it about by such means.

John had well nigh the whole day before him when he was released from attendance

in the court, and he would have very gladly set out on his journey home at once; but the women, though in good set phrases they had told him they were quite ready for the road, had still very many things to do. Mrs. Arnold, anxious as she was to be home among her maidens again, and fearful as was the picture she drew of their wastry and carelessness, was much more to be blamed than any of the others; her old habits had returned now, and even a journey home had to be thought of a good deal. Besides, it was not every day she had such a chance of getting bargains as just then was possible, and so she threatened to carry back with her more luggage than John at all approved of, and delighted the shopkeepers by the extent of her purchases. Many things which Mrs. Arnold had never known before that she needed,—or, indeed, had known properly the use of,—must be had now. Thus this last day was fully occupied by the mother and daughter in selecting, with the assistance of the Archbolds, whole loads of articles of every conceivable kind, from those which concerned their dress to things suitable for the cattle.

Annie obtained some insight into dairy economy in assisting at the purchase of a huge churn, various sieves, and other things useful in the making of butter and cheese, and might have fancied that Mrs. Arnold was about to set up in business, from the endless variety of articles which she bought. But shopping, it is said, is a continual delight to women. Mrs. Arnold certainly felt no weariness nor fatigue, let the shops she visited be ever so disagreeable, or the article ever so *outré*. Only that John remonstrated loudly, they might have had as fellow-passengers a cow or two of a famous breed to take to Northumberland; but while Mrs. Arnold yielded in this case, she resolved that Francis should come back with John, when he returned, and bring her stock from the famous Ayrshire race to improve her dairy.

While, therefore, the women were so busy, filling their trunks to overflowing, John went as he best could down to the foundry. Poor fellow! he was but the shadow of his former self. His cheek was pale and hollow, his eye sunken, his sturdy form emaciated and worn, and as yet his



left arm was worn in a sling, and bandaged. His ribs, supposed to have been broken, had only been bruised, and now gave him no trouble or concern. Under his cap the wound on his head was concealed, but over the right eye the end of the scar could plainly be seen ; and, altogether, those who had so often seen him, with firm, steady step, crossing the square, would have had considerable difficulty in recognising him now. The day was mild, and fresh, and balmy, the sun shining out cheerfully bright from a true April sky, and the river—such patches of it as he could see through the mazes of masts—lay calm, and glittering in the sunlight. The southerly breeze was just powerful enough to drive the smoke from the numerous tall chimneys out of the amphitheatrical hollow in which the manufacturing portion of the town was built, and it was drifted away across the river in dense, heavy clouds, towards the northern hills. Looking upwards at the street-crossings, the unwonted clearness of the atmosphere, or some peculiar effect of the sunlight upon the hills which surrounded the town, made them appear as if they had

approached nearer; they actually seemed to overhang it, and as if they were about to push the huge sugar refinery on the hill-side down into the bottom of the hollow. All nature—even town-nature having had its face well washed—seemed to rejoice, and so did John, at the progress the mild, fresh spring was making; but John rejoiced, if that was possible, with a fuller burst of thanksgiving, as he crawled along with the help of his stick very slowly, and somewhat more painfully than he had anticipated, that he was once more in the open air to enjoy the blessings of the time. During his long confinement to the house there had been great changes in the town, as well as in the season. The idle men formerly so plentiful were to be seen no more. Ever and anon he could see that labour was now abundant at the harbours; the strike had come really to an end, and the bad weather had passed away, which had thrown so many men out of work. He saw various groups of the black gang, of his own and kindred trades, hastening hither and thither, carrying tools, and bearing the air of men fully employed; all was bustle and busi-



ness, instead of idleness and stagnation. Men were once more to be seen who looked active and cheerful, and the gloom had in so far disappeared.

At one place, where several streets met, and joined into one leading to the docks, John came upon a scene which, perhaps better than anything else could do, proved the great changes which had come to pass. From a foundry on the hill-side a large party of men and boys were—with shouts almost, it appeared, of triumph at the re-opening of the trade, or of delight that the mighty caldron was finished—dragging along a huge steam boiler to a vessel lying beside one of the great cranes in the docks. The sight of this busy multitude, and the shouts they were raising, acted on John as the trumpet on the war-horse; and as they spread out, stretching in long lines along the ropes by which the carriage was drawn, till they filled the whole street,—black and begrimed though they were,—torn, tattered, and patched as were their garments—it seemed to John a picture he had never seen the like of; and he could have shouted with them for very joy that once

more the sounds of busy life were falling on his ears, and the sight of struggling working men was before his eyes. But it made him feel his weakness all the more, and led him to contrast his former with his present self, and he was glad at last to turn away along a quieter street, and to hasten as he was best able towards the foundry.

Mr. Morton and his men had not been idle during these weeks, which had been so wearisome, in one respect, to John. The little machine was so far completed that a true idea might be formed of it and its adaptability to various purposes. So far all had turned out so satisfactorily that another engine on the same plan, but of much greater power, had been put in hand, which was to be sent to London; and to-day John was about to give Mr. Morton some further insight, to add somewhat to the idea, to improve upon his own improvement. His seclusion had, therefore, not been altogether unproductive. Of course Mr. Morton rejoiced to see John once more afoot among them; it is not the wont of shrewd, keen men, such as he was, to be otherwise with

those whose brains are productive in their service. In the work, too, he was welcomed by the men, warmly, and many a sympathising look was directed towards him as he walked slowly and painfully forward, to see the progress of the work. The men, though slow in most cases to adopt a new idea or opinion, had long before this come to the conclusion that this new engine would be a triumph, and the inventor, therefore, was worthy of honour. Thus John, as he advanced towards the machine, was regarded with curiosity, and more favourably than would have been the case before. From his old friends there was a hearty welcome, with congratulations that he was so much better, and that his idea had taken such substantial shape, being now advanced so far towards its final development; and John at length left the erecting-shop with flattered and gratified feelings. He had yet to submit his further improvements to the master, and was by far too weak to remain longer.

The master was busy—busy in such a way that he could spare no time to the inventor then. Neither would he allow

John to wait his leisure; but making an appointment for the evening at his own house, which John thought himself strong enough to accept, under the convoy of Edward Archbold, which he now greatly needed, he returned home.

At home—his mother repudiated with great vehemence the idea that these lodgings could ever be home, as mothers are very much inclined to do—they were all too busy in their preparations to give him much of their company; but somehow John persuaded Annie to sit down beside him for a little while, and even to look over the drawings which she had assisted him in making—at least, in shading—during these tedious weeks,—which were the only quick-flying portions of the whole time, and had seemed all too short to them both,—while his work was in progress in the foundry.

“I’m to see Mr. Morton to-night, Annie,” John said; “I want to show these to him, so that they may, if he pleases, be at work while I’m away. Little will he think to whom he’s indebted for such clear drawings! You should get the fame, my Annie, not

I, if this be a success, as I feel confident it will."

Annie blushed, and turned her eyes from the plans to him, looking at him with affectionate admiration as she said,—

"But are you quite strong enough for this second visit? Are you sure, John, that it will not hurt you? As for the fame, honour to whom honour is due. I will be content with that; and surely it is you that deserves it all, and the success when it comes."

"It will be joint work then," John answered, as he drew her closer to him, and put his arm around her. "As for being strong enough, I'll do for that, I fancy, dearest; besides, for weeks to come, I'll have you to nurse and guide me, even if I do fall back a bit on the journey."

"I trust you'll not do that, John. But remember I'll be a most exacting nurse, if I'm to be one at all. I won't allow you to trifle with your health while away. You must leave all the horrid shop behind you here, and go for health alone to the hills—not for new inventions or discoveries."

"Ah, we'll see about that. I fancy,

Annie, that I'll care more to be out among the holms by Hetton Water-side with you than in my old den. Ah! I know you'll rejoice in the fresh country, and the old place."

"If going in a spirit to be pleased be a proper preparation—yes; but I fancy, dear John, I shall be a hard judge. I never saw anything of country life, and hardly know more of the country itself than what you and Marion have told me of it."

"I don't know that there is any time better for the like of me going home than this spring time. The summer or autumn would most likely have pleased you better, and been more interesting; but even now, with the woods putting forth their leaves, and the fresh green of everything, and the primroses,—the wood below Outchester will be quite radiant soon,—and the cowslips and violets, the very air will be perfumed; and then the fields growing every day greener, and all the holms and hills dotted over with the little white lambs, the river murmuring so pleasantly, its banks in such a glow of colour, and vocal

with the birds—Oh, dearest! you will enjoy the place and the season.”

“I never doubted it, John, dear. What a beautiful picture you draw of your country, and only to think poor me never to have seen anything of it at all! All will be so strange too.”

“Only for a little while. You’ll not be strange at home. It will be home, dearest Annie, and just see if what I say is not true; you’ll find it so before the first hour is gone. Such a welcome as we’ll get, to be sure!”

Annie looked a little confused; the idea of the welcome from the community at Outchester had been thought of before, when Marion had told her of the publicity—so to speak—of life among these simple country people.”

“My father will meet us in Edinburgh, I hope. Won’t he be delighted to see you and your mother! You won’t be afraid of him, will you, Annie?”

“I think not; it does not appear that he is one to be greatly afraid of, from what Marion says.”

“Truly he is not; but one of the best

men breathing. If you don't fall in love with him, I'll be surprised very much."

John laughed, as he caressed the graceful head which leaned on his shoulder; being yet helpless as regarded one arm, he could not raise the blushing face to see how Annie looked, but with the strong right arm he could press her to his breast, and feel the beating of her heart as he spoke to her of home, and the good people there.

John and Edward went to Mr. Morton's magnificent mansion at the west end of the town that evening, and had a long conference with him. Mr. Morton was not entirely a self-made man; his father had laid the foundation on which he had built up the grand superstructure of his gigantic business; but Mr. Morton had been once only a working engineer in his father's little foundry, and his education had not been very much more extensive than the ordinary one which the children of the best class of mechanics received in Scotland then. He had really risen from the ranks, for it was principally by his means that his father's business had been elevated from the position of a small jobbing shop to

that of a great engine factory; in his own hands since, it had become one of the first in the land. Mr. Morton had, however, educated himself, though without becoming one of those model monsters about whom the writers of goody books are continually prating, as if self-education was such an extraordinary thing, or always led to one's becoming a millionaire. He was a lover of art, after a sort; perhaps it would be too much to say of the highest art. Still, he loved pictures and statuary, and patronised the artists of the town and of the country. His house, at least the more public rooms, were filled with pictures — perhaps too much so, for they gave you rather the idea of an exhibition than of the living-rooms of a borough magnate. Various pieces of sculpture were to be seen also about the house — copies, in a reduced size, from well-known groups. The first time John was there he had seen none of these things; but now Edward and himself were ushered into a dining-room, the walls of which were covered, as in an exhibition, with pictures which John could not help admiring very much, and which Edward glanced over carelessly.

Interview was a most satisfactory one from every point of view. John had become one of those men whom even self-interest alone would prompt a capitalist to honour, and treat liberally. Had Mr. Morton only been actuated by such a selfish motive, he would have done so; but he was a fair and honourable man besides and was prepared to do kindly by both the young men, independent of the inventions they had perfected. So they got it arranged; the fresh ideas of John on the subject of engines were gone into, and greatly approved of — Mr. Morton expressing the astonishment he really felt at the work which the wounded man had done, in spite of his suffering. John blushed under Edward's wickedly knowing glance, and feared he would betray his secret; but Edward was silent. Mr. Morton had decided that the engine ordered for London should be made after John's plan, and John should, if he was able, go there when it was ready, to superintend its erection; and when he returned to Grasaig, the master hinted, that then, or before then, he should be prepared to come to an arrangement, which

he doubted not would be satisfactory to them all.

“For,” he said, “these patents will become of great importance, and will be greatly more profitable kept in our own hands than disposed of to others.”

When they came away there was nothing more to do in Grasaig for the time, unless to speculate upon and wonder at the oracular deliverance of the master, and prepare to get away as soon as possible to Northumberland.

CHAPTER XIII.

WELCOME HOME TO OUTCHESTER.

"WELCOME to Outchester, my darling," Mrs. Arnold said, as she took Annie in her arms and kissed her under the great elm which overshadowed the end of the old house. "Welcome home to Outchester, and you too, bairns, it'll make the awd place look as it has na done for years and years, to have sae mony young folk about it i' the spring."

Mrs. Arnold had driven on before with Mrs. Archbold in the gig, which, in consequence of their numbers, had along with a cart been waiting for them at Framlington, the gig specially for the accommodation of John and the strangers; but John could not drive, nor would he submit to be separated from Annie, so he had persuaded his mother to set off alone with Mrs. Arch-

bold, leaving the younger people to follow more leisurely under the charge of Mr. Arnold himself. John therefore had the opportunity of pointing out to his beloved, who was seated cosily beside him among the hay, the various places of interest and beauty which they passed. Annie was delighted with such a novel and primitive mode of travelling, and still more with the lovely country through which they passed, then in all the brightest, purest flush of its spring beauty. Marion, for a considerable part of the way, walked beside her father, so that the lovers had it all their own way, and when she did come into the cart, just as it was about to cross the ford over one of the burns which flowed into Hetton Water down a narrow valley of most exquisite beauty, she was very little bar to their conversation—they were both accustomed now to be unreserved with Marion, and the primroses which she flung in handfuls over Annie, would have afforded an excuse and opportunity for carrying off any confusion or shyness Annie might have felt. They were all in the highest spirits. The day was most delightful, the air

balmy and soft as a day in the end of April could be, and the country in its appearance, its sounds, and its promise so full of spring and hope, that even a darker lot than any of theirs should in the circumstances have been lightened.

The party had left Grasaig the day before. Early that morning, accompanied by Edward, to see them off from Glasgow, they had come up the Clyde in a swift steamer, quite electrifying Mrs. Arnold and Marion by the novelty of the conveyance, and the pleasantness, as well as beauty, of the sail up that magnificent river. The good mistress of Outchester, if she never saw this country again, would have plenty to talk about at home for the remainder of her life, that was very clear. Then these much abused modes of travelling—mere temptings of Providence in her old vocabulary—were really so swift, so sure, so greatly more comfortable than the old ones to which she had been accustomed, that now she had not a word to say in their condemnation. It was a very different thing indeed to journey thus up the beautiful river, able to walk about the deck at

her pleasure, to look freely all around from side to side, to see here the hills of Argyle, there the more fertile slopes of Renfrew, to behold with her own eyes the famous rock of Dumbarton and the woods of Blantyre, the ruins of Dunglas and the lines of new villas springing up ever and anon on the Clyde's banks, from being shut up in a coach with four or five other unhappy individuals, unable to see anything but the muddy dykes or dusty hedgerows between which they passed, and so Mrs. Arnold was fairly vanquished. They went to Edinburgh by the swift boat on the Canal, and were met in the Royal city by Mr. Arnold, who could not do enough to show kindness to Annie Archbold, his new daughter, as he already reckoned her. On the next morning they departed from Edinburgh, filling up nearly all the coach, to the serious displeasure of some other travellers, who were forced either to take outside places along with Mr. Arnold, or remain behind, while John occupied the interior with the ladies. But now the journey was ended, and there, under the great elm which was already clothed in

delicate feathery foliage, stood Mrs. Arnold, once more in her own element, welcoming her bairns, as she called them, while around or at the doors of the cot-houses were assembled the wives and children of the hinds and herds, quite as desirous to welcome the coming visitors as any of the household, and all eagerly anxious to see the young girl who was to be "married upon John," for the engagement of the two was already quite well known.

John was more shaken by the journey than he at all cared to confess, especially as the latter part of it had been made in the springless cart, over the rough roads, at his own urgent request; but his heart bounded again as he echoed his mother's welcome to Annie, before he himself was surrounded and taken possession of by all the old wives of the little community, already loud in their condolences and congratulations. They were pleased with the appearance of Annie, and but that Marion had hurried her into the house, would have informed her of the fact—if she was ignorant thereof—that she was "a real bonnie lassie, and a' weel far'd." John

bore the brunt of their good wishes and opinions, instead, with much patience and complacency, and was only able to cut them short by reminding them that he had been ill, and was still very weak, and so obtained leave to enter the house. Marvellous was the talk that night in Outchester about the stranger ladies, and divers the guesses soon to be repeated as facts, as to who they were, and what fortune Annie possessed; of course they gave her a very handsome one when they were at it, and it cost nothing.

"Now, hinny," Mrs. Arnold said, when they all re-appeared in the parlour, "ye're to mind that ye're in Northumberland, and folk canna live in Rome and strive wi' the Pope, but maun aye do as he bids them. So ye maun be a guid bairn, and do as I bid ye."

"Ay, Annie, dear," said Marion laughing, "Mother's Pope in Outchester, all obey her commands, and never dare to question whether they're right or wrong,—except whiles," she added more hesitatingly.

"It will be a very pleasant service, I have no doubt of that," Mrs. Archbold

said, "and I suppose we must just all of us submit at once, unconditionally, with a good grace."

"Yes," Annie answered, "I have no fear about it in the least; but oh, Mother, such a delightful place, did you ever see anything to equal this, Mother dear? The ride over in the cart through such a country was just purely delightful, I never enjoyed anything so much in all my life."

No, Annie, nor perhaps ever will again, for that state of mind, and that companionship you then enjoyed, will perhaps never occur to you again. You may hereafter be quite as happy, but never so ecstatic as you have been to-day, during that drive with John Arnold and Marion.

"I have not a doubt about it, my darling," said Mrs. Archbold significantly. "You had very pleasant company too, and that makes any place delightful."

"As to obedience to the mistress," said Mr. Arnold, "be not feared about that, for though she likes her own will, as all women do, I fancy, she's no that hard, after a', on one, her bark's maistly waur than her bite."

"Ye'll soon know what my will is," Mrs.

Arnold answered, laughing, "for this present any way. We've a' had a long journey, no through smoky towns, but the fresh country air, and I expect that ye'll do justice to what's put before ye. Now, hinny, ye maun just do as we country folk do in sic matters."

Betty had set forth such a tea-table as would have astonished most people who dwell in towns. There was no fear before her eyes, or even those of her mistress, as to what the said dwellers in cities would think or say about its coarseness or prodigality, and thus the table was loaded with dainties, and glittering with the best china, and the famous old heir-loom silver, which Mrs. Arnold herself had disinterred from the corner cupboard of the parlour. Very appetizing too were those viands, delicate fowls, and home-fed, home-cured ham; butter, if not set forth in little fancy pats, which yet did those townsfolk good to see; and scones and cakes, of varieties such as Annie had never dreamed of, all of home manufacture too. Truly Betty, and her companion in the kitchen, had not been idle in anticipation of the coming of the strangers;

she had taxed her ingenuity to the utmost, only if she had been providing for a score the supply would have seemed more suitable than it did for those who had come. Ere long, both Annie and her mother learned something of the obedience Mrs. Arnold required, and while on this first occasion, at least, doing ample justice to her dainties, they were both much amused at the earnestness with which she urged them to eat. The young minister did not come in till they had made some progress with their meal, and when he did, he gave a respite to the strangers; Mr. Johnston looked radiant and happy, as if Marion's coming back was to be to him the beginning of better things.

. When tea was over, John lay down on the sofa while Marion carried Annie away to show her some little of the wondrous scenery which lay around the farm, and John was left to relate to his father — who, honest man, could hardly be restrained from going with the girls — what he had done and what they were doing at Grasaig, in which he was specially interested. A worldly conversation, but carried on in a

most unworldly spirit. Mr. Johnston could understand better than any one in the district the value of John's inventions, and as he was perhaps better able to explain them to the old man than most people would have been, he was likewise kept within doors. It ^{*}was a sore trial to both these young men to see the graceful airy figures flitting past the windows, and to hear the pleasant voices now and again ringing cheerily among the river banks, or on the hill top that looked abroad over the distant sea, while they were detained within by such cold, dry, hard subjects as iron wheels, and cranks; and cylinders, and valves.

Annie, excited all day, was becoming more and more so every moment with the novelty of all around her. Here she was as free as the winds, with no fear of what "Mrs. Grundy" would say if she saw her running about without either bonnet or shawl. Before, around, and beneath lay scenes which it would have done the greatest misanthrope good to see, at such a season and such an hour. That long stretch of country, with trees, and fields, and hills all glittering in their coat of tender, brilliant

green. The sun, already low down in the west, throwing long shadows across the landscape, and flashing brightly on the windows of the old castle at Bamborough, and of the houses which stood out in view along the coast, and sparkling on the distant hill-tops, behind which it was so soon to disappear. The trees, such as had burst the bud and were assuming their summer livery, diversifying the nearer woods with every variety of colour, from the pale to the deep, from the brown of the oak to the downy-white green of the aspen. Then the sward of these river banks was quite aglow with primroses and various varieties of the lily and narcissus, the hyacinth and wild geranium. And over all was the music of the country and the season, the distant sounds of the voices of the men afield, the faint calls to the horses of the ploughmen, the clearer voice of the milkers among the kine, and the grand chorus of the birds from hedge and holt and brake, following up the clear solo of the thrush or blackbird, interrupted now and again by the call of the cuckoo, while through all these sounds ran the deeper, more mono-

tonous murmur of the river fretting between its banks, and chafing against the rocks and shingle of its bed, all combined to form a scene such as Annie Archbold had never conceived of, and which once seen and heard could never by any possibility be forgotten. The level rays of the sun flashed on the broad waters of the German Ocean, and though, from the great distance, the Fern Islands were too indistinct to seem to float like emeralds on its surface, they were yet very picturesque, and formed a fine pendant to the landward scene.

"This is like enchantment, this is surely fairy land come back again," Annie cried at last. "No wonder you looked so calmly and coolly on the beautiful Clyde, which always affected me so much. This half circle is the finest sweep of nature I have ever seen, I doubt much if there is or can be anything finer than this, or even as fine, anywhere."

"Yes, it's fine, everybody admires this view. It is my Mount of Vision. You see I got this seat placed here for the purpose of enjoying it, but I don't know, I'm

not very sure, but I like a place down by Hetton side perhaps better even than this. Will you come, and we'll have a nearer view of the river?"

"Oh, wait a little, for I could gaze here for hours. What heights are these before us? I think I could almost tell their name from the descriptions of John and Ned. Isn't that long line of heights, with the dark spot at this end, the hill of Flodden, isn't it, Marion dear?"

"Yes, you are a quick scholar, Annie, I see, that dark spot as you call it at this end is a wood. The battle was fought further along the side of the hill, but we'll go see it some day. Come along now, the sun has set, and the gloamin' is my favourite hour for the water side."

They crossed a field, stepping upon the tender herbage which had been so closely rolled, that it lay as smooth and flat as a bowling green. Marion walking boldly across the growing corn greatly astonished Annie, accustomed to guard her little flower beds so jealously from tread of dog or cat. It looked, she thought, so like wanton wastefulness, when a few minutes longer

would have taken them into a beaten path.

"Nonsense," Marion said, in answer to her remonstrance, "you see men and horses, and a heavy roller, have passed over it. Were the corn even twice as high we should do it no harm, it would spring up again quite as vigorous as before. Come down here now—what do you think of this?"

"It is very pretty, quite a bower for a love-sick maiden, I declare; and such a quiet one too — one could dream away the hours here finely."

"Yes, I have often done so. I like this quiet place and scene quite as much as the grander one up above yonder."

"I suppose you have some pleasant thoughts associated with this quiet corner, Marion, haven't you, dear?"

"Perhaps; but I have always liked this peace and calm since I was a very little girl, and I like it quite as much now."

"I wonder,—and yet I don't wonder, for those at peace, and living in peace themselves, often make choice of those who are stirring and exposed to disquiet—at your choice, Marion dear; I suppose the contrast

between this peaceful scene and what poor Harry Grey has had to pass through, must be so very great, that this place should be like heaven to the poor fellow when he comes home. Have you heard from him lately?"

Marion blushed slightly; there was by far too sincere and entire a confidence between them to confuse her much or for a long time.

"No, I hoped there would have been a letter waiting for me here before now — there should have been; and sometimes, when I think of all the dangers, I am like to go mad, and this suspense itself is very dreadful."

"Ah, but then there are so many contingencies, so many things happen to letters. Sometimes we haven't heard from father for two or three posts, sometimes a great bundle of letters come all together, and so it may be with Harry Grey, more likely indeed, as he is farther away. From what John says of him I cannot believe that he is to blame; there must be some other cause, I'm quite sure."

Marion looked at her companion most gratefully, put her arm round her waist

and kissed her affectionately before she answered; perhaps that was the best and most expressive answer.

"Thank you, Annie dear, I persuade myself that it is so, but I dare not think much. He would leave and come home if he could, and I expect to hear of this. Harry wishes to get rid of his engagement, and he said that there was a probability he should. Had he not said so, I should not have been so anxious."

"Well, Marion, hinny, as your mother says, keep up your heart, there's no telling, a day or two longer may make all clear."

"I hope so, but we had better go up the brae again, or I shall get a scold, or anyway a reproachful look from you know who, so come away."

As they went up the path towards the house, they met the troop of horses returning from the field, going down to their watering-place by the river's side; and as the girls stepped up on the higher ground above the deeply worn path the young hinds saluted the stranger and their master's daughter with rustic gallantry and awkwardness, and took care each one of them

to have as good a view as possible of the young lady, John Arnold's joe. Curiosity and respect were strangely blended in their air and manner, for what Northumberland peasant, however coarse and however inquisitive he may be, but is respectful to a lady and a priest.

CHAPTER XIV.

RED ROWLY FOSTER'S SEAT.

"ARE you going to Marion's bower?" Annie asked John the next morning, as they went together down the path towards the river side. "I was there last night, and approve of her taste entirely."

"Marion's bower!" John repeated. "Well, that is a prettier name than I thought of for the place; but if you mean the seat among the trees down there, dearest, that's not Marion's at all; and if it's to get a new name, I claim the christening of it myself; only see how selfish I am becoming, darling."

"I thought it had been Marion's peculiar choice; she likes it well any way, doesn't she?"

"Yes; but her bower should be up yonder on the hill-top; she got the one

made, and only took advantage of the other. There is a story connected with it of the olden time, and it has a good name already; so, if we are to give it a new one, we'll call it after you, my darling, Annie's bower."

"What is the story, John, I believe everything about this place has a story, from the boll, as Betty calls it, in the kitchen, and the magnificent York rose-tree upwards. Tell me the story, John."

"Oh, it is to be expected that there should be plenty of legends about this place and country, but there are far fewer than you would suppose. You are in the land of romance now,—if the land of old thieves can be that. You have Flodden, and Chevy Chase, and a good half score of border castles and battle-fields before you, so that we may well have our legends of Outchester, older as it is than all but the hills and the sea. But I'm no poet, darling, and it would require a true poet, or minstrel, to do justice to the rather grim legend of Red Rowly's Seat."

"Red Rowly's Seat! what a fierce sounding name! doesn't it tell one of desperate

Border forays in its very roll? Now here we are at it, sit down and tell me all about it if you feel able."

Annie spread a large thick plaid on the grassy bank, and carefully as a mother for a darling delicate child, arranged it for John; and then sitting down beside him, looked up to the thin face with expectation of hearing the story, but so tempting was the face before him, that John felt it impossible to resist seizing the opportunity so bewitchingly offered by the near neighbourhood of those coral lips ere he began. Then sitting side by side, his arm around her, and her hands caressing the bleached fingers of the hand which was still slung by his side, she said to her:—

"Well then, dearest, if I must be the chronicler, here the legend is. You must know that, some four hundred years ago, the Lord of Hetton was cruelly murdered by the Baron of Fordham, a kind of murder under trust, as they called it, during these wild fighting times. He was slain deliberately in Fordham Castle,—which you shall see to-morrow perhaps—where he had gone to arrange a quarrel. He and

all his followers were slain save one man, the boldest and bravest of them all, Rowland Foster, an old man, who escaped as by a miracle. Well, the murdered baron's estate came into the hands of a kinsman, as guardian of the infant heir; and this kinsman, against the wish of the widow, the Lady of Hetton, and very much against the will of the followers of the baron, quite contrary also to the custom of the country, agreed to a peaceable settlement of what at first had promised to be a blood-feud, and accepted a sum of money instead of blood for blood. Old Rowland was the tenant of this place—then a peel house or Bastille tower, a strong square fortalice of considerable importance in the defence of the fords of the river. Here he returned from the castle, when his arguments to urge on the new lord to revenge the murder of his master had been disregarded, and shut himself up with his following—for he was a little feudality in himself. The old man did not come here to rest, but to plot, and for months together he spent his days on this seat, devising a scheme of vengeance. He could not smite the chief assassins, but

after awhile he found out who had really been the instruments in striking the blow—they had been brought from a distant part of the country to do the deed—and he could take vengeance on them. So Rowly, Red Rowly as he was called, passed the summer and the autumn, being here on this seat nearly at all times, because he could look towards the place where the murderers dwelt up there on Cheviot side. The watch upon the hill-top there,—for this was one of the stations where watch was kept by night, and by day against the irruptions of the Scots—could tell where old Rowly was to be found during these months, and the people never thought of going into the tower when seeking him. Thus the place became intimately associated with Rowland Foster.”

“But that’s not the whole, there must be more to tell than that, surely.”

“Yes, dearest, but I was out of breath; I’d rather work an hour among iron than tell a story, I fancy I’m fitter for it; but to go on. When the November nights, dark and dreary, came, Rowland, without a word of his dreadful purpose openly ex-

pressed at home, made a round of visits on his old battle steed to all the places where the late baron's most attached followers lived, and set a tryst with them for one of those starless nights when none but moss-troopers like himself could find their way, even on the plainest paths. But all the people of this country were moss-troopers in those days, and the older men knew every pass, and ford of stream, or moss for miles on miles. A hint of his purpose he gave to each leader, and no more; but that was sufficient, they had their kindred and their lord to avenge, and old Rowly, the best and most trusted of the late baron's men, was a fit leader. So by paths and through mosses, and passes among the muirs and wastes, he led on his band, which grew in numbers as it advanced up the water, till he came to the valley where the actual murderers dwelt. Rude and fierce as Rowland Foster and his followers were, that clan—for there were clans among the hills of Northumberland in those days—was ruder and fiercer still. The assailants surrounded the place as they best could, and then made the onslaught, to which the

surprised people could scarcely offer any resistance, as, not anticipating such an attack, they were utterly unprepared for it. Of course, when they found that they could not escape, they fought as they best could, with the courage of despair; but soon the Hetton men added the havoc of fire to the slaughter of the sword, and by both these fearful agents the valley was desolated. It is said that as suddenly as the men had been assembled, as suddenly they separated, when the deed was done, and the party who accompanied the old man home were compelled to lead him to this seat, instead of the tower. And here, in the dim grey light of the November morning, he could see the cloud of smoke which overhung the desolated valley on the far hill-side, and which told of his accomplished purpose, his gratified revenge. Old Rowland saw this, and then, as the story goes, falling back into the arms of his friends, was removed to the tower, but he never moved nor spoke again. It is a grim story, dearest, and thus it is that this bank or bower is called Red Rowly's Seat."

Annie shuddered, perhaps it was quite

natural at the finale of that fierce Border legend, the scene of which was the very spot now so radiant in its spring glory. Here was a romantic story indeed, and the shudder gave place to interest in the legend. This spot henceforth would have a fresh association with the old feudal fidelity of the moss-trooper, and perhaps more still with the time, and the occasion, and the person of the teller.

"Oh, it would be barbarous, it would never do to change the name, never, John," she said, "I had no idea there was such a story; why, it's as full of action and plot as many an old ballad."

"Yes, dearest, and has taken such hold of the people too, you may see that, while almost everything else has been forgotten, this story and the name remain fresh. The families of the murdered and the murderer have passed away out of the country for hundreds of years, and are quite forgotten; but the old fierce retainer is remembered as well as ever. So much for fame, you see, among the people."

"Well, perhaps the old man deserved to be remembered better than did the barons.

But poetic justice, which traditions and legends generally are ready enough to inflict, would have made the baron the sufferer, and not the vassals; shouldn't it have been so?"

"Truly, but they were visited really with poetic justice too, so far as our country-side was concerned. They never did good in it afterwards, and ere long they moved off to a more southern county, to find there a great and famous family, it is true. We shall see some of these days the ruined towers of their old stronghold, with the shield and crest of the family sculptured above the gateway, though other families, more than one, have owned the place, and lands since the days of Edward VI. As for the family of the murdered baron, his castle is remaining entire to this day, an occupied residence; and there are legends connected with it, which are worth hearing, but Marion is better able to tell you of them than I am. Now I still fancy, notwithstanding the story, dearest, that we should change the name, and call this Annie's bower."

"No, no, besides that it would be posi-

tively barbarous ; I've heard that it is scarcely possible to do such a thing, the people cling so tenaciously to the old names ; but in this case it would be a great shame. The name itself at present is quite a story. Red Rowly's Seat ! why, John, it has a sound which carries you back to the times of the Border Minstrelsy at once."

"It has so ; but the new one is so much prettier, and to me anyway would have a meaning sweeter than all the Red Rowlies of the Foster clan, and there were many among them of the name. It will be Annie's bower to me from henceforth, dearest."

Annie rose without answering. Perhaps she suspected that John was about to become more demonstrative, or feared that prying eyes would take note of his affection. She did not know a great deal of the habits of the country, but nature taught her, perhaps, that people would not object to be able to tell that they had seen John Arnold kissing the stranger lady ; so she withdrew herself very gently from his embrace, and began to gather various wild flowers which bloomed around. John rose also after a

little while, and took her arm, the strong seeking the help of the weak; she cared for him most sedulously, as they walked down to the margin of the river, and up by its side. Each step almost disclosed a new scene to Annie Archbold, and so they proceeded slowly along the grass grown banks, now under the trees, now beneath the bush fringed scaurs, now by the more open holms, where the people were busy sowing, or the milch-kine grazing. Annie could scarcely properly express her delight, and perhaps never before had felt so happy. Mr. Arnold himself, busy superintending his ploughmen and sowers in the fields, in one of those beautiful amphitheatres which had originally been a small lakelet in which Hetton Water had rested itself, before dashing through the deep gorge beneath the old house, cantered down as soon as he saw the two figures on the waterside. Mr. Arnold was proud of the beauty of the river side—all the country was in fact—but had by no means the same appreciation of it as the stranger had. He could point out the particular parts and special scenes which visitors had most admired,—to

Annie no show stock scenes were needful where all was beautiful, the river, the woods, the fields. Yet the beauty of the country had become, as it were, a part of the nature of these country people, and though to the enraptured visitor or ecstatic tourist they might most probably answer that such a place was indeed "grand for turmits or for feeding kye," thereby dashing to the ground all their got-up romance, and earning for themselves the character of ignorance and insensibility, they at the same time really felt its beauty, and were affected deeply if—they made little outward manifestation—by the fine scenes around them.

"I'm glad to see you here, my dear," the farmer said, "out among the fields. You'll no know muckle of this kind o' thing I reckon?"

"I don't know that ever I was in the country before." Annie answered; "but this I know, I never was in so pretty, so delightful a place."

"Truly, it is beautiful; but ye maun get the gig, and gang awa' farther up the water, and see the auld places, they're

mair interesting, maist folk think ; or may be ye could ride, my dear. What do ye think, John ?”

“ I’m afraid I can’t answer,” John said, “ but Marion could drive us up. I can’t, you know, just now.”

“ Oh, not so soon as this, there’s no need whatever. Why, Mr. Arnold, you at least might let me be a day or two with you, and give me time to learn all about home, before you pack me off sight-seeing that way.”

“ Me pack you off, my lassie ! Na, na, onything but that, truly. But there’s little you can learn from the like o’ us, I reckon ?”

“ More than you fancy, Sir. I’m going to learn to milk the cows, and Marion’s to let me into the secret of her poultry, and Mrs. Arnold is to teach me how to make cheese and butter, and I don’t know all what besides ; but curds and cream is part I know—and I’m going along with you to see them sowing, and what the people are doing up in the fields——”

“ Truly you have cut out work for yourself—or Marion has for you,” Mr. Arnold answered. “ But come awa’ up the bank.

John, are ye able, my man? Ye maun take great care till ye be stronger."

"Oh yes, nearly able for anything now that I'm home and here."

"Ay, I thought sae," the old man drily said. "Had ye been yer lane now, I wouldna have advised. But there's a no bad road along the hedge side, and ye can get a rest, and a seat if ye need one. Now, my dear lassie, ye see the man there wi' the sheet about him, he's the sower, carrying, as the Scripture says, the seed in his bosom. He's no just the now—

"The man who, bearing precious seed,
In going forth doth mourn,"

as the Psalm tells us, but that's perhaps because he's only a servant, it's me that should mourn, only that the Lord is so good, and that I sow in hope, trusting that baith him that soweth and me shall do as the ither twa lines say—

"He, doubtless, bringing back his sheaves
Rejoicing shall return."

"I trust so," Annie murmured, much struck with the simple piety and true

appreciation of his position on the part of the old farmer. It was a religion in the life of every day she had never seen before, which, though in some measure prepared for, she did not expect to find even in the busy field among his labourers.

Annie was amused and interested with the spectacle, the men steadily traversing the field from end to end, while with regular sweep of the arm they scattered abroad the precious seed, the girls as invariably meeting them at regular intervals, with large measures filled with the grain from sacks standing in lines across the field, and then the men and horses, the harrows, and the roller busily covering it in, and pressing the soil closely about it, in so far to protect the seed from the hosts of feathered pillagers around. It was not so exciting as a harvest scene in the same beautiful place would have been, but it was very pleasing, and the busy industry of all in the various fields around was very cheering; albeit some of the work that she saw women and girls doing did not look very suitable work for their sex. One thing was plainly evident, however; boys and girls were not use-

less encumbrances or heavy burdens to their parents in such a place as Outchester; there were they to be seen of almost all ages doing something. On the barer sloping heights above she could see them "herding the craws," as she was told, when she asked one of the girls what they were doing, and every now and then the report of a gun, fired by a girl too, showed how vigilant she was to scare the birds off the lately sown fields; and then there were boys and girls gathering stones, and "wrack," and carrying them to heaps which were being carted away to be burned, or spread on the rough roads as metal for filling up the ruts. It was rather startling at first to see these carts driven by well grown girls with all the skill of professional Jehus, and to notice them coming back, standing erect in the empty cart, with their long, sun-bleached hair flying loose in the breeze, like so many Bacchantes, and yet to find them so shy and modest, and dropping such demure little curtseys when spoken to. Annie was pleased and astonished by all she saw, and was at the same time the centre of interest to all who saw her, as she stood supporting

John on her arm. Mr. Arnold, no less than his people, came to some conclusion on the subject, differing in many particulars, it may well be believed, but agreeing in the main, that Annie was very "bonnie," and John a very lucky fellow. The young women were doubtless set a-thinking or conjecturing what Annie's thoughts would be occupied about, or trying to imagine how they themselves would be likely to feel in similar circumstances. Perhaps some of them already had some such experience.

Annie and her companion returned at last slowly to the house, John being delightfully fatigued by the walk. It was delightful to grow wearied in such circumstances, and then there was the farther enjoyment of lying on the sofa in the parlour, with the whole household about him as soon as their domestic duties were over, and to hear Annie relate to her mother, and comment on to the others, all that she had seen out of doors. A stroll to Marion's knoll in the afternoon, in which the whole of them joined, a long round of visits amid the houses, wherein Marion introduced her sister elect to the gossips,—

while John slept—he needed rest yet, poor fellow—as the sister of their friend Edward; when Annie not only saw houses and people she had never been able to form an idea of, but a degree of comfort which, from external appearances, she would never have expected. Her reception and welcome were also so genuine and sincere that there would have been little wonder if she had come to the conclusion that, in spite of the sluttishness and apparent poverty in some cases, and homeliness in all, this surely was a model community so far as comfort without refinement went. With long confidential and tender conversations the remainder of the day was filled, and thus the first day at Outchester was spent, in great peace and great delight by them all.

CHAPTER XV.

NEWS, GREAT NEWS.

So the days passed, varied of course by many incidents as John grew stronger, and acquired the use of his arm again. His progress towards complete health and strength was very rapid. Each day he could take longer walks, even though the first Sunday he was compelled to stay at home—by the public opinion of the household, but against his own wish—with only his mother to keep him company. It was a rule in Outchester that all should go to church, a rule with which all visitors invariably complied, as any visitors worth having will do in any household wherein such a custom is established. Only his mother! A few months ago John would have thought his mother the best possible company, but alas! how marvellous a change; she who whilom had held the

first, now occupied only the second place — there was another whom he would have preferred, with whom he could have sat on Red Rowly's Seat, in the calm sunshine, to look over the Sabbath-keeping country. By and by, as he grew strong, he made expeditions with Annie, Marion mostly, the elder people sometimes, accompanying them, sometimes on horseback, for Annie was persuaded into learning the art, sometimes in the gig, sometimes, and latterly most frequently, on foot. It was so much pleasanter, and so easy to allow the others to go before, or to throw them off altogether for a time. In the gig they were all set so fast together, that there could be no tender speeches nor caresses, and as for such a thing as a kiss they dared not essay it, however refreshing or to the purpose it might have been. It was a season of unfailing delight to Annie, whether at home or abroad; it was the same to them all, in fact. Mrs. Archbold, with her quiet refinement, of which Mrs. Arnold stood a little in awe, was already making her presence felt in the household, and Marion was acquiring habits which in themselves are so little, and yet in



society are so important. Marion had always been simple, and unaffected, and ladylike, and so she would always remain, but yet she could learn much from Mrs. Archbold, and she did so diligently. Annie drew closer to John's mother, and was initiated into the mysteries of the *ménage*, the milking of the cows, the making of butter and cheese, and the other branches of domestic economy in that plentiful and well-ordered household, and she stood as fair a chance of being spoiled as ever any one had done by the old lady and the servants, who boasted—people in their position are very seldom found to speak well of such interlopers as Annie—of her and her doings among them, and displayed with great pride the pretty ornaments which she had made for them.

One morning when the letter-bag was opened—now an established fact at the Outchester breakfast-table—there was a surprise and almost a scene. There were letters from Edward to his mother and John. Letters to Annie from Maggie Barnard and various other young lady correspondents, who had found out where she was;

letters to the minister and Mr. Arnold; and Marion was turning away, hardly disappointed, but yet with a sudden pang at her heart, when her father mentioned her name, and handed across the table a worn, chafed missive with a deep blue "ship letter" mark stamped upon it. Marion felt a swelling in the throat, as if she was about to be suffocated, and was only able mechanically to take the letter in her hand, but was quite unable to rise to leave the room. The room, with its furniture and occupants, appeared to whirl round and round, and for a time she could see nothing distinctly but the rays of sunshine which poured in through the branches of the York rose, and threw their tracery fantastically upon the carpet. It was a little time before the dizziness, the vertigo, passed away, and on coming to herself she found all the good people around her greatly alarmed. Annie, who had risen from her seat, had her arm around her, and the others were seeking remedies, or speaking kindly while they wished to apply them. She was the centre of their interest, first for herself, next for her letter, which the young minister was



looking at with no friendly eye, and which most of the others guessed would contain news of great interest and importance to her. Annie, however, drew her away from the breakfast-table, leaving the others to their eggs and correspondence, or their speculations, as the case might be; and Marion in the privacy of her own room had leisure to recover herself, and read the letter. Annie would have withdrawn, but Marion clung to her still, till she had devoured the epistle—not a very lengthy one, though it had come all the way from Singapore—when she seemed as if about to be overcome again by her emotions.

For it was a very gratifying letter to Marion Arnold. The heart of the absent engineer still was in the right place, which all but Marion herself had begun to doubt, as week after week had rolled on without any sign from him; and in this letter there was reference to various others which had never arrived, thus explaining his silence satisfactorily. Harry Grey was on his way to Calcutta; he expected to be sent home altogether, and if so, before many months had passed away, he might be in England

again. His health had failed in the long, tedious, harassing voyage out, and though he had borne up bravely, and been promoted after one of those river battles which had made his captain and his ship so famous, either the miasma of the rivers, or the nature of the climate—or perhaps both combined—had caused him to be sent so far homewards as Calcutta as an invalid, and Harry fancied he should be sent to Britain and to Marion.

Crying and smiling by turns, Marion read and re-read the letter, while Annie rejoiced with her, that so far, at least, the cloud had been lifted, and the past torturing suspense removed. A long interval might still elapse before the wanderer came home, but at least he was as devoted as ever, though so far away, and wrote cheerfully enough, and very hopefully of the future. One thing particularly struck Annie when she was permitted to read the letter—it was the thorough faith of the writer. There was not the breathing of a fear or doubt as to Marion's constancy and fidelity, and there was an air of sincerity running throughout the whole, which very clearly

told his character. Harry Grey rose immensely in Annie's good opinion from the perusal. He must be a good fellow who had written such a letter, and worthy of Marion Arnold, he who trusted her so undoubtingly. Many people could have written a better letter, most young men in love are more profuse in professions of affection, while there was a something in this which could not be simulated, and which set the mind of Annie at rest, for she had been questioning, vaguely, could this dim, visionary, absent sweetheart really now or ever have loved her sweet friend.

When Annie returned to the parlour, which she did alone, leaving Marion to recover her composure, and to prepare herself for meeting them all once more, she found that the young minister had gone away on his daily walk to Fordham, but the others waiting with no small anxiety and impatience for the return of Marion. Annie in a few words told them that Harry Grey was returning home, and Mrs. Arnold, waiting to hear no more, hardly waiting to hear that indeed, hastened away to see with her own eyes, and hear with her own ears, the reality of the tidings. Of course

all hope for Mr. Johnson was thus dashed to the ground, but then he had never breathed his hope to any of them, though they had all clearly enough understood the young priest, and fathomed his wishes on this subject. Perhaps there might be a shade of disappointment in the air of Mr. Arnold and his wife, but they were much too good parents to wish to constrain their daughter in a matter so delicate as this, and fraught with consequences so lasting and important.

Mrs. Arnold softly opened the door of her daughter's chamber, and, however much she might have been annoyed and displeased with this revival of Marion's first feelings, or at the disappointment of her own dearly cherished plans, her displeasure must have disappeared at once, when she saw her daughter on her knees giving thanks to God for His great goodness, and praying for the guidance and safety of the wanderer, and for strength to herself. Mrs. Arnold had perhaps never sufficiently before realised how greatly this affection for Harry Grey had become part of her daughter's nature till she heard that



prayer. Marion, though so very young, had kept her love hidden deeply in her inmost heart, not bringing it out to the view of her nearest or dearest, save on indispensable occasions, and then only very partially and for a moment. Neither was the object near on which she could shed its fragrance, and thus show to the bystanders some little of its power. It had been kept closely hidden and strictly guarded, growing stronger under the assaults made upon it during the bygone autumn, to shake her fidelity to the far distant dear one. All these things had only intensified her love, which, perfectly unconsciously, however, now revealed itself to her mother in the simple thanksgiving and prayer for him who was yet far away. On her mother it had all the effect of a direct revelation.

“My dearest bairn,” she said, as soon as Marion had ended her devotion and risen from her knees, “my ain lassie, little did I think I had e’er vexed you sae; but I’ll no do it again, hinny; no, I’ll not, come what may.”

The mother and daughter were crying

in each others' arms, but their weeping was far from being sorrowful. They understood each other better now, and the slight shadow which the former anxiety, on the part of the mother, for her daughter's welfare had brought between them—the only one during all Marion's life—was now to pass away as a thing that had never been, and their intercourse to become freer and more confidential than for months it had been.

"Now, my dear hinny, ye maun tell me what Harry says, and ye mauna mak ower muckle wark about it; but come away down the stairs again; there's nae need for everybody to ken that ye've been wearying and sick at heart for word frae him."

"Nor would they, mother dear, if I could help it. I'll go down at once; all our own friends know before this of letters expected,—and know by experience too, Annie says, the pain of not getting them at the expected times—and as for others, there's none to heed, but Mr. Johnson."

"May be; but what does the lad say wherefore ye havena heard before now? As for Mr. Johnson, it mayhap is as well

that he did see ye had gotten some good news. I'll no say but it is."

"Here's Harry's letter, mother; you'll see it's likely he'll be home soon."

Marion gave her mother the letter, then went and arranged her hair more carefully, washed some telltale marks of tears from her face, and put her dress in order before going down to the parlour, while her mother read somewhat slowly the short letter. The old lady had to pause several times, however, and to take off and wipe her spectacles ere she could finish it, and when she had done she exclaimed:

"Good bless the lad! He's just as true a lad as I could desire for ye, after a', my dearest bairn."

"Thank you, mother, for the word; true is better than anything else to me."

"Ay, hinny, and I mean it when I say that. Oh that he were only here and things a' in a fair way, that we could see how they'd roll! But we're forgetting our friends; ye've entertained them when ye maun have had a heavy heart, hinny; now ye maun try to do it when ye ha'e a light one. God bless ye, my ain bairn!"

They went away together down to the parlour, where there was only Mrs. Archbold to be found, the other two having disappeared. A young lady of romantic cast would perhaps have been hurt and offended that her tidings, which of course were the most important that could arrive, did not keep all waiting, eager to hear them; but Marion was not a romantic young lady, she was only a country girl, and she felt pleased that Mrs. Archbold only was there to congratulate her on the good news; and then Mrs. Archbold was almost the only one who could speak of the time necessary for the voyage, of the contingencies of the journey home, and she could speak encouragingly also, and tell Annie of her own husband, out in these far distant regions, whom she did not regard as lost, though so far away.

"But," she said, "my dear girl, there are more wonderful letters than that one to you to-day. Edward has written me about his prospects. Poor fellow! he has been very melancholy, being left all alone as he has been. Annie will be telling you how he has comforted himself, or at least been

comforted; but he has got prospects opened up to him which quite bewilder me."

"How?" Marion asked.

"Mr. Morton, it seems, wishes to make sure of our two inventors, and Edward is to have his engagement cancelled, and to be put into a responsible situation at once, with the brightest hopes for the future, if he will stay in Grasaig. Edward refers me to John for particulars; but when I turned to ask him about them, I found he had drawn my daughter away, and so I must wait, I suppose, till he comes back, with what patience I may."

"What a shame! How could John be so selfish?" Marion exclaimed. "Let me go to seek them, dear Mrs. Archbold. I know where they will be found."

"No, no my dear, I know they don't mean to be selfish at all; but it's just human nature," Mrs. Archbold sighed. "I know the young man returning to his strength, with the world opening prosperously before him, is thinking only just now of how soon he can rob me; but what must be must be, only if Edward was home I should rejoice."

Marion saw the kind of robbery Mrs.

Archbold meant, and as a few months more might find another mother pondering in the same way over the selfishness of young men in general, and one special person in particular, she did not feel called upon to say anything on that point. At length she said :

“ You said Edward had allowed himself to be comforted for your absence, dear Mrs. Archbold ; how has that come to pass ? ”

“ I did not say for my absence, my dear girl, but for *our*. Poor fellow, if Miss Maggie Barnard had not taken him up, he would have been quite melancholy. I'm glad that they have become friends again. ”

“ I thought they were always good friends, ” Marion said, innocently.

“ Yes, but latterly not so good as before, we thought ; however, that has come about again, and I hope will continue now. His madness will now pass away. ”

Marion might perhaps have a glimmering of what the madness was, but she made no remark, further than asking Mrs. Archbold to accompany her in a walk by the water side, the usual forenoon exercise of the old lady. Moreover, however much Marion

had been shocked at the selfishness of John and Annie running away without telling the great news John must have received, and however well she knew the particular spot where they were to be found, she led Mrs Archbold by a quite different path to Hetton side.

CHAPTER XVI.

WILL YOU NOT SAY WHEN, ANNIE?

WHEN Annie Archbold came down from Marion's room to those who waited in the parlour so anxiously for tidings, she little thought how greatly the other letters of the day, to other individuals of the party, would interest herself. They had been so taken up with Marion as hardly to heed their own correspondence; John, it is true, had read the two letters from Mr. Morton and from Edward which had come to him, and in other circumstances the flush on his cheek, the triumphant gleam of his eye, might have attracted their attention and called for explanation. Now it might be set down to pleasure at hearing about an old friend, or the comfort and joy it would bring to his sister, and otherwise pass unnoticed even by Annie herself. As soon,



however, as Annie had told her tidings, and Mrs. Archbold had begun to read more carefully what Edward had written, John beckoned Annie to come out with him, and led her away down to the famous bower on the river side, with a mystery and a consciousness about him which she could not make out. When they were seated, and the left arm had found its place around her waist — a very pleasant kind of exercise truly, by which to accustom a broken-limb to regain its wonted power — John said:

“This is a morning for good tidings, it would seem, dearest Annie. I’ve something to tell you, which I hope will make this day as deserving of a white mark as any day ever did.”

“What has happened, John? I’ve not looked at my letters yet; here they are, but of course they can’t tell anything. What is it, John?”

“How would you like to live in Gra-saig?” John asked, instead of answering the question. “How would you like, my darling, to settle down for life there?”

“What a question!” Annie was begin-

ning to tremble now, she could not tell for what either. "Why do you ask that?"

"Answer me, Annie dearest, for as your answer is, so will my resolution be. Would you be pleased to settle down in Grasaig for life?"

"John, I wish you would speak plainly. My likings depend upon so many things that I could hardly tell where I should best like to dwell."

"Well, darling, I'll tell you the reason. Perhaps my vanity interprets your answer too favourably. I am offered by Mr. Morton a settled residence, a settled occupation in Grasaig, as favourable as I could desire. What would you advise me to do—accept it or not? Of course, without your concurrence I would do nothing. If you would like Grasaig, then Grasaig it shall be."

Annie was silent; this opened a new vista, raised the veil from the future a little, but that future they had scarcely spoken of, however much it had been in their thoughts, for the busy town would become no longer the place of temporary sojourn while Edward learned his trade and the father was

absent, but the place where a new home must be hers, a home of her own, where she must found a new family, and, instead of being merely a branch, would become the root perhaps of many branches. John's question brought up that time, and what could Annie answer.

"Mr. Morton says to me, dearest Annie," John said, after an interval of silence which he could understand well enough, "that I must go away in a day or two to London; my engine is ready, indeed sent off by this time, and I'm to be on the spot to see it fitted and started, so that I'll have to leave very soon, and you must answer me my question before I go. Shall I close with the offer, or go to the south to seek fortune in another place."

"No, no, John, but how can I advise when I don't know what the offer is? Do that which you think best, and there's little fear but I'll be pleased."

"Ay, darling, I hope so, but there's something more behind. However, Mr. Morton offers me the situation of manager, to have a good salary, and, besides, a share in the business. The first certain, the partner-

ship certain too, but the money returns depending on how the business goes on. I had no right to expect anything like this for years to come, if even then. Now what do you say, darling?"

"What could I say but congratulate you, dearest John?—yes, with all my heart; for I know, though you don't say it, that it is because Mr. Morton sees your value that he offers so fairly. I rejoice, dear John, more than I can tell to hear of this." Annie lifted up one of the hard hands which grasped her own, and kissed it before John could prevent her, but the next instant he had taken his revenge, pressing her to his heart, and kissing her rosy lips, till she fancied he would never cease.

"Thank you, darling, thank you," he said." Now I'll get all set in right order, and we'll soon get settled down in the old place. But I said there was something more behind. Can you guess what it is, my darling?"

"No; something else as surprising perhaps," Annie answered, trying to look as unconscious as possible.

"Well, I don't know, something quite as

important to me however, and, my dearest Annie, something which you alone can decide. We don't need Mr. Morton here in this, however much his offer makes things possible for it. When, Annie, will you be mine? That is the question of questions to me now, darling."

Annie looked up innocently in his face. He was holding her fast to his breast, utterly regardless though all Outchester had been looking on, the broken arm doing yeoman service once more in this special duty, though too weak for other work. Annie raised her head from his shoulder, and lifted the radiant face innocently, looking straight into his eyes as she said :

"I thought I was yours already, dear John; you've often said so, at least."

"Yes, darling, mine in affection now and ever, but yet not mine wholly and entirely. Ah, darling, it is the time when that will be that I am longing to know and wish you to tell me. Can you not, dearest Annie?"

"I don't know. You must speak to mother; but yet, John dear, my father will be home by and by, and he'll expect to find

his Annie as he left her; I know mother will wish to wait for his coming."

"Well, my dearest Annie, I have only this more to say, I'll take Mr. Morton's offer thankfully and heartily, and go to work with a will, for now I'll work for you; but I mean to get a house too, and get it ready, and then, even if your father hasn't come home, I'll give your mother no rest, not an hour, darling, till she gives me you."

"I'm to have no farther voice in the matter then, in that case, John."

"You're to have all the say, sweetest and best, but have you not delegated your authority already to your mother? Ah, darling, if you'd only say a time. I'd be ready in a day, in an hour, if you was willing. A week or two 'll see our house furnished. I wish you'd only fix the time, my sweet one."

"Oh, John, why do you press me so? I'm not in the way; your time would be my time, but then father, we must wait till he comes, indeed we must."

"The Lord send him soon and make him favourable! I shall be miserable till I have you back, not to leave me again, dar-

ling. You mind that old book of songs. Whenever I think of you and the work, it comes fresh back to me, what Montrose says:—

“ ‘I’ll make thee famous by my pen,
And glorious by my sword,
I’ll serve thee in such noble ways
As ne’er was known before ;
I’ll deck and crown thy head with bays
And love thee more and more.’ ”

So I’ll have it, with God’s good grace, though my pen be only a drawing pencil, and my sword a fitter’s hammer.”

“ But you said something of having to go to London, John dear,” Annie said, to lead him away from the subject, interesting as it was. “ When will you go? and how long will you be away? ”

“ I don’t know, dearest; I don’t know if I shall go. I’ll plead illness a little longer, if I’m to be sent off for months to come, to go through the old cauldrie life, after tasting the pleasure of your company these pleasant weeks; I’ve a good mind to do it.”

John spoke a little disconsolately, notwithstanding his boldness a few minutes before. Perhaps it was only a scheme the

cunning fellow adopted to get a more precise and definite answer from Annie. If so, she did not perceive it.

"No, you won't, John, you mustn't; what would they say or think? Why, the good offer has made you stronger already, and no one would believe you."

"But they must, if I persist. Ah, darling, if I could only say to myself, 'Annie will come to me; Annie will be mine altogether by such a time,' it would do me more good, and set me harder to work, than any offer Mr. Morton could make."

"Well, John, I can't say nay; I'm ready, dear; but both for your sake and my own, not to speak of my dear father and the rest of them, we had better leave it to him."

"It must be, I suppose. Well, I bargain, dearest, if I wait how long — a month — is that too short? — well, two? You shake your head; then three? If I wait three months you'll be ready then, even if your father has not come. What do you say, darling?"

"You are more obstinate and persisting than usual, John; but let it be as you will."

"Hurrah! yes, I'm obstinate, Annie."

Then, if the old people agree in a month, you'll be mine; if not, then within three months. I could almost make a voyage to India to see the old gentleman."

"No need for that, for he may be home everyday now; mother expects him immediately."

This important preliminary settled, they were silent for a time. These silences had often fallen upon them even when most happy during these pleasant weeks of spring, in which Annie had seen the fields brighten, the grain spring up, the woods become clothed with their full foliage and blossoms. The spring was passing into summer now; no season could be more propitious to lovers such as they,—their own present blissfulness, the rich promise in the future, all combined to make the season in a measure typical of their own fortune, and lead them more entirely to enjoy it and rejoice together in it. Annie started at length from the dreamy reverie so blissful into which she had sunk, as she saw the figures of her mother and Marion on the waterside, and she blushed as she thought they must have seen how absorbed herself and John

had been in each other, when they passed down the bank. However, she pointed them out to John, and thus called him back from Elysium to the working bustling world once more.

“What a selfish fellow I am, to be sure!” he cried; “there’s your mother and my own people all will be so glad when they hear of this, and I all the time keeping it to myself. But no, no one has the same claim to hear it as you have, dearest Annie; I did right enough to tell you first.”

“Yes, you are selfish, just see how much so, there’s all my letters lying scattered about there; you have prevented me so much as thinking of them, much less reading them; you have a great deal to answer for, John, to-day.”

“I hope so, but these can wait, I fancy; young ladies are not such important correspondents as all that. But Edward says something about himself; Mr. Morton wishes to lay hold of him too.”

“Well, come away to mother, you’ll have plenty to tell them all for one day. But I fancy we’re both selfish, ‘tarred wi’ one stick,’ as Betty says, for I never thought of

Ned at all. What does Mr. Morton mean to do with the fellow?"

"I'll tell you when we meet your mother. Nay, darling, I can only say what Edward says, and it is only half a letter he has written me."

When they came to Mrs. Archbold and Marion, a few words explained the state of affairs so far as John's new prospects were concerned, and then it appeared that Edward was to have the charge of a department in the work, as John's chief aid-de-camp in fact, so as to bring out his peculiar ability. The works really were to be greatly extended, another large and very important department was to be added, that of iron shipbuilding, so that the discovery of two inventive geniuses, who at the same time had the requisite caution and skill, and at least one of them experience, was a great matter to Mr. Morton, putting out of the question the worth of their inventions, which would of themselves have made a business; the like prospect of partnership was held out to Edward at the end of a fixed time also, so that he had something before him for which to work. Mrs.

Archbold was naturally greatly pleased at her son's fortune, and at the advancement of her son-in-law elect. Her husband, when he came home, could not find fault with a partner in such a work as Mr. Morton's, however much he might have done so with John Arnold the engineer; and when they were returning to the house it was with a lighter step, and a more jocund countenance than before. She whispered to Marion:

"I was sure before, I am quite certain now, that he carried my lassie away, for the purpose of stealing her from me altogether."

It was a day such as Outchester had not seen for years, perhaps never before. John was no longer the plain working man, he became at once Mr. John, Mr. Arnold of the Grasaig Company, Engineer, and his mother's ambition, already excited greatly, just wanted this to be added to her son's name to be satisfied. It was very well, an important fact, that the company of which John was now one, were known as great engineers; all that was further wanted was to have the word "great" applied to John himself. And there was every

prospect that she would yet even in this be gratified. If possible, she became more tenderly affectionate towards Annie, as this was the way she could best show her pride in her son.

There should not have been a great deal of preparation needed for a young man like John going to London, but a great deal was made, and a couple of days consumed therein, for the girls and Mr. Arnold were to go with him part of the way, as far as Newcastle. In the interval John had time to learn and to be amused with the story of how Edward had been fairly caught and laid sure hold of by Maggie Barnard, who, now that she had found her sweetheart again, seemed to have recovered her sweet temper and affection for Annie, and wrote reproaching her for being so close in concealing her engagement with John, and yet warmly congratulating her on her choice, while she told, if not of an actual explanation with Edward, that they were at least once more on the old familiar lover-like terms.

“When once Edward tells the Barnards what his prospects are, he’ll soon be made

sure of," Annie said. "Not that they would not be glad for Maggie to take him or to get him anyway, but for fear he should get introduced to other society, and she should lose him altogether."

"I always thought her a sweet girl," Marion said; "I should think Edward and her very suitably matched."

"Yes, perhaps they are, I thought so fully once. Well, she is a sweet girl, and I've known her longer than most of my friends, and so has Ned. I daresay they'll be a very happy couple, after all."

"No fear; Ned's a bit of a professed rover, but once settled, there'll not be a more perfect pattern man in Grasaig. Maggie Barnard may consider herself very well off if she gets Ned," John added.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING. — LONDON BRIDGE.

“BLESS my heart! where have you fallen from? How, in the name of all that is fortunate, came you here at this time, Harry? When did you arrive in London? I’d almost as soon have expected to see the man in the moon, or his brother the Chinaman, whose crockery you’ve been smashing, as to meet you here to-day, Harry Grey.”

Such was the salutation of our friend John to another person he encountered, whom only his keen eyes could have recognised as his old shopmate and dear friend, Harry Grey. Harry was thinner, apparently taller, and rather worn-looking both in face and person, as if he had but lately recovered from lingering illness, or passed through extraordinary fatigues or difficulties. Not that he was weak or ill,

however; he seemed strong enough, and the grasp with which he laid hold of his friend sufficiently proved the soundness of his muscles, and their unimpaired vigour. Harry was walking by the side of an older man, whose appearance was gentleman-like and nautical, and who had an expression in his countenance, and a something in his appearance and air, which caused John Arnold to look at him closely, with the idea that he had not only seen him before, but must have known him intimately, and that very lately; indeed, John felt quite startled, and found himself far more attracted towards the stranger than towards Harry.

“Ah, old fellow, and is this you in the flesh? I should not have known you, and certainly had not the faintest idea of meeting you here; but it is very fortunate. Why, I only arrived last night, and was just on my way to see about the train, to get away down to the north; but eh, lad, I’m so glad to see thee once more.”

“Who’d a thought of meeting you here, Harry, of all places in the world? Why, I fancied you were in Calcutta: it’s not a week hardly since we’d a letter from you,

and then you were going there. When did you get home, Harry?"

"Only two days ago: only last night to London. But how are they all? How is—Marion? my dear Marion!"

"Well, well, and looking for you. I'll tell you all about that by and by."

"But how comes it that you're in London, John? True, it is a long time since I heard from you, but you seemed to think then you would remain at Grasaig. I wrote there to you as soon as we could get a letter ashore. What have you been doing with yourself?"

"Oh, it's a long story; but one of those things so bad for trade—a strike—is at the bottom of it all, both my being here and my appearance. But I've not left Grasaig, nor am I likely to leave it either. I shall settle down there for life, Harry, I fancy."

"So much the better, lad. I've changed my notions about that, too, very much while away. Are you for the City? or have you some time to spare?"

"Both, Harry. It'd be hard times if I couldn't spare time for you, any way. I

have an engine erecting across here, of my own invention, lad; and I'm my own master so far. I can see how they are getting on by and by."

"Then come away, and breakfast with us. Captain Archbold, this is my dear friend I have often spoken of to you — John Arnold. He's lately from Grasaig too, and may be able to tell you of your family, perhaps."

John shook hands with the friend of Harry Grey in some sort of fashion; how, he could not tell, for every nerve in his frame was tingling with astonishment and delight. How blind, not to see that the expression which puzzled him as being so familiar, while he only looked at the stranger's face, was the expression of countenance dearest to him on earth. Annie was just her mother rejuvenated, but there was that indefinable something one often finds where the cast of features is dissimilar which identified her with her father also.

"Perhaps you know my son, Mr. Arnold?" the Captain asked. "He is a sort of an apprentice at the work of Mr. Morton,

at Grasaig. My family, indeed, are living there with him just now."

"Perhaps I know Edward Archbold?" John almost mechanically repeated, quite stunned as yet with the suddenness of the discovery.

"Why, John, what is the matter with thee? Hast lost power of speech or understanding of a plain question, that you behave so badly?"

"No, no, Grey; neither the one nor the other; there is something confusing him. But, Mr. Arnold, I haven't heard from my boy for months: perhaps you do know, and can tell me of him?" Captain Archbold asked again.

"Truly, I can — yes, I can indeed; but to think of such a meeting as this, after all. I beg your pardon, Sir; but meeting you has put me beside myself nearly. I know *all* your family, Sir, and parted with some of them only a week ago. Edward is one of our chief people now—my own right hand man, in fact; and he and Mrs. Archbold and Annie are all very well indeed, only needing your return to make them very happy."

"Ah, ha, John!" Harry Grey cried; I see —. Well, well, let that pass just now; but *we* speak boldly—my own right-hand man, to be sure. What is the meaning of that, lad?"

Mr. Archbold, or Captain Archbold rather, had looked a little inquisitive too, as he again shook hands with John, when he spoke about his family so affectionately and familiarly; for the tone in which Annie's name had been pronounced had not escaped his ear.

"Why, this,—that I am now a partner in the Grasaig firm; and that Edward Archbold, just now in charge of my special department, will be one if he goes on as he's doing before very long time passes away. But where is your hotel? for it's no satisfaction to speak here, where one half of what one says is lost."

John said truly: the City end of London Bridge is no place for confidential communications at that hour of the morning when, to a stranger in London, it seems as if all the world were pouring across the famous bridge, and when the multitude of vehicles of every description seems perfectly to defy



calculation. It seems, in fact, to the inexperienced on-looker a real Maelstrom, a perfect Babel, a confusion worse confounded, when he comes upon that continuous stream, or rather streams, of human life, rushing, pushing, and jostling each other onward; and the roar arising from the mixed multitude entirely deafens and overwhelms him, and all who are not to the manner born and bred. So enormous the traffic, so immense the thronging crowds, so extraordinary the number and variety of vehicles, and above all, so indescribable the sound, that a country person in London is stunned and driven back into himself in amazed bewilderment and fear. In no place, no, not on the top of our wildest Highland mountains, where nothing but bare rock, wild muirs, mosses, and fells can be seen under the clear sky, does a feeling of such terrible, such oppressive loneliness affect one, as amidst the turmoil and bustle of such a scene at such a time and tide as this. For there you can have, however solitary, the companionship of nature; here you feel yourself to be nothing; this rushing, heaving, struggling mass pressing on so self-



absorbed, so heedless of all, neither caring for you nor any other unit which helps to swell the mass, except in so far as you may be an obstruction in its path. Here all seem embarked on a struggle with time, as well as with human competitors, and therefore no one has space to think or spare, nor thought to bestow, save as to how he may best press forward. Here you may see a race for bare life; a race in which, if one falls, his fellows have no leisure to stop and pick him up—scarcely could do it if they would—they must crowd on, like soldiers across a battle-field, heedless and unrecking where or on what they tread, whether their next footstep may be on the panting body of a friend or foe, and passing these awful relics of the struggle almost as a matter of course. A grand theme on which to converse with one's country friends, or to reflect on in one's study; but a very unsuitable place for hearing or attending to such startling news as John Arnold had to tell, nor yet a very desirable place to make known to Annie's father that he was Annie's intended husband.

When they reached the quiet City hotel



to which Captain Archbold had taken his younger fellow-traveller the previous night, when they arrived together from Portsmouth, both the old man and the young had partly recovered from the stunning effects of the vast crowd, and the still more startling information John had given them. Harry Grey had come home overland with Captain Archbold: he had been recommended to the veteran as one whose opinion would be valuable as to the possibility of the route which he had been out examining. Harry was only a practical engineer, but they had found out long ago that he knew a great deal more than merely how to drive an engine, and a practical man in the circumstances being needed he accompanied the Commodore home. What had merely been an acquaintance in the way of business, soon became a friendship hearty and sincere, and hence the good fortune of John Arnold. Arrived at the hotel, they both were ready enough, the one from eager desire to hear of John's success, the other as eagerly anxious about his son, to question John. John anticipated them both in part, and very soon threw the old Captain

into a state of still greater amazement; quite bewildered him, in fact, as he proceeded to tell of Mrs. Archbold and Annie.

"You wondered, Harry, to hear me say I was a partner in the Grasaig work; and you, Sir, about your son. Well, it's natural enough you both should; but it came about quite simply for all that."

"But are you quite sure, John, about what you say?" Harry asked, doubtingly. "Bethink you, man, it is one of the greatest works in Britain."

Captain Archbold and himself both looked as if they fancied something was wrong, and that John laboured under some hallucination; but he only laughed.

"You fancy I speak rather large; that it is very nearly ridiculous for the working engineer you knew not so long ago to speak so. It's true, for all that. Do you mind what I said to you the last time I saw you, Harry, when you went away? Well, I had my ideas clear on a certain point then; and in Grasaig, man, I got the very chance I wanted, along with your son, Sir; and then, while at home at Christmas, I wrought out one idea—Edward was at

Outchester with me—and Mr. Morton adopted the plans as soon as he saw them. After breakfast I'll show you the machine, if you like: I'm having it fitted up close at hand. Well, I was half killed by some men at the end of the strike, and my thoughts being full of the engine, I found out some further improvements; and for these, rather than buy them from me, Mr. Morton offered me a share—a small one, of course—and any way, a very good salary as manager.”

“And my son, Mr. Arnold?”

“Just about the same. Edward is god-father of my engine as a whole, and father of a part—a very valuable idea his part is too; but his youth stood in the way; however, he's no longer an apprentice, but has the management of these new machines along with me. Why, if all goes well, we'll make our fortunes; any way we'll be both better off than we could have hoped to be for years and years.”

“Beat me hollow, as usual, John; but I most heartily wish you long life and much prosperity,” Harry cried, shaking his hand heartily.

"I don't doubt it in the least, Harry," John answered. "But, Sir, I can tell you more than you think: I have been at home recruiting since I was hurt, and came direct here from Outchester: I parted with Mrs. Archbold and your daughter only about a week ago; they're both living just now in my father's house at Outchester."

"At Outchester!" Harry cried. "I said ——"

"And where is Outchester?" Captain Archbold asked, almost mechanically—he was so surprised. This young fellow, whom he had never seen before, scarcely even heard of, knew more of his own family than he fancied any one in England did, and spoke of them as if they were his own.

"It's my father's farm in Northumberland. When I was hurt they took great care of my sister, who was staying with me, and I cannot say how much of me; but, any way, we all went home together."

"You don't mean to tell me next, I hope," Captain Archbold said, still perfectly confused with amazement, "that Annie, my daughter, is your wife. Going home with one looks not at all unlike that."

"I shouldn't be the least surprised. Why, John, lad, it looks wonderfully like it, I must say," said Harry Grey, laughing.

John did look a little foolish; however desirous he was of propitiating and standing well with Annie's father, nothing was farther from his thoughts than making his affection for her a subject of conversation in the presence of his friend, but he must needs speak out now. Perhaps he might feel that, having come so near to the subject, the best thing he could do was to go through with it at once; any way, he said, blushing up to the very ears at the same time:

"No, Sir; not yet. Annie insisted that we should wait till you came home. It's not my fault, I can assure you; for I urged her as much as I could for an earlier time, but she wouldn't agree."

"Well done you, John. That's a fair and plain confession, any way," Harry said.

"Yes; but I thank you, Mr. Arnold, for telling me plainly. Why, she's only a little girl yet, after all," the Captain replied. "My wife and Annie, then, are in your father's house? I fancy, if they cared

for you, you seem now to care for them; but I must have them come up here to me."

"Ah, Sir, who wouldn't care for them?" John answered. "And then, Annie is not such a girl, either: you are thinking of her as you saw her last, Sir, not of what she is now. What think you, Harry? The young lady is a good year older than my sister Marion."

"And a little girl! Indeed, Sir, I can quite agree with John on this; for Marion, the darling, was a woman in person and feeling when I left England. How does she look now, John; as pretty as ever?"

"Yes; prettier, I fancy, every day, if pretty can be applied to the like of her. I don't think it can, though, for my part; but one soon forgets the mere looks, when they discover daily greater beauties in the mind."

"Oh! now you're away on a tack quite different from that I'm on. I'm speaking of one, and you of another young lady."

"Perhaps so: very likely; but you spoke of having them up here, Sir?"

Captain Archbold was in a brown study:

it might be expensive, and useless at the same time, to bring his wife and daughter so far, unless he definitely knew how long he was likely to stay. He turned as John spoke, and said:

"Yes. Isn't it the part of a wife and daughter to come to meet me after I've been so long from home?"

"Truly, it is; and there is nothing would give me so much pleasure as to see them both here."

"Where is this Outchester in Northumberland? Is it easily reached?"

"Quite easily. The new railway was opened to within ten miles lately; and at Alnwick, or almost any of the other towns, you could get a conveyance; or, better still, I could write them to send over the gig."

"No; that would take too much time. But I'm wrong to go, or think of going, to a strange house in such a way, to take any one unprepared, unless themselves."

"You don't know Mrs. Arnold, nor Outchester, Sir, or you would never say that," Harry Grey cried. "Unprepared! Why, I believe if we were to take a ship's company there, we shouldn't find her so."

John laughed at Harry's enthusiasm. "That would be rather too much to expect; but your going will not put them about, however much it may astonish them; it will please my father and mother much more. When could you go: to-day?"

"I fear not; but the first thing to-morrow. Will you go with me?"

"Oh, yes; we'll a' gang thegither," Harry cried, speaking broader than before, as if the very idea of the old country brought back the old words.

"Have you, then, a special interest in this Outchester too?" Captain Archbold asked, smiling.

"Certainly he has," John answered. "As for my going, I'll see in a little while how far the men have got on, and then I'll know. I don't know but I should like it above all things. Suppose I write Edward, and tell him to meet us; he knows the way already."

"Where is your machine?" Harry asked. "You're not afraid to show it to me, John, are you?"

"No; even if you were a thief, you dared not steal the idea, for it is patented already.

I was going to propose you should go and see what Edward and I have done, Sir."

"Willingly; but I have an engagement at one o'clock, which must be kept, in order to get away to-morrow."

"Oh, you can keep both very easily," John answered. "The place is quite nigh to this where my men are working, and it would be a pity but that you should see the work. Will you not write Mrs. Archbold?"

"No, I think not: I have written already to the old address; and shouldn't we be as soon as a letter ourselves, supposing we start early?"

"Perhaps so. I'm not sure."

"Well, come then," Harry said. "You haven't time to tell me what I most wish to hear, John, so you had better give us something to think about, and I'll excuse your selfishness, especially as I'll get all the information very soon myself, and in a much pleasanter way."

They went away together to see the engine. Harry Grey had come home for good, at least to go no more away to sea. He hoped to be employed as superintend-

ing engineer of the great Company to which Captain Archbold belonged, and was likely to be so, if this unexpected, and as he thought unprecedented, advancement of his friend did not alter his views. As for Captain Archbold, it flashed through John's mind that he should be kept at home. He had an idea on the subject, but till he saw Annie he would speak of it to none.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MEETINGS.—ARRIVAL OF THE STRANGERS.

“JUST look, Marion dear, there’s a sight to make the good people stare. A coach, no less, on the road.”

“Yes, and what is more than all that, it is coming here too. I wonder who it can be, coaches are not so common. Perhaps it is a party of tourists, but surely it is too late for that.”

Annie and Marion had been looking out over the fair country, watching the effect of the waning sunlight, as it faded into the gloaming in the lower parts, while the great luminary himself was blazing on the hill tops, and touching them as with a living fire. They had just turned to leave the knoll, and were taking a last survey before descending to the river side, where the young people of the hamlet were

amusing themselves, putting the stone, running races and jumping, testing their strength and agility. Nothing could well be pleasanter, more beautiful, or more peaceable than the scene and the hour. Some of the late singers among the birds were yet making the woods vocal, and the odour of the hawthorn and wild rose perfumed the air. It was the very time and place to welcome back the wanderers. As soon as the girls had made quite sure that the coach was really coming to Outchester, they hastened towards the house with the news. As they went down the slope and came into fuller view of the road, though the chaise was still a good way off, they could see that their light dresses had caught the eye of the travellers, for one who was sitting in front began to wave his cap, and a hat was likewise waved from one of the windows as if in salutation or joy.

"Who on earth can it be?" Annie questioned. "They, whoever they are, can bring no bad tidings, any way, I should fancy. What think you, Marion?"

Marion was very pale and trembled violently, whether it was from a myste-

rious sympathy with the coming strangers, — one at least reads a great deal of such intuitions — or that she thought she recognised the saluting figure, whatever was the cause, certainly she was considerably agitated, and did not answer for a little.

“I don’t think they bring bad news, any way,” she said at length, “but let us hasten on and tell them.”

“Why, you’re all of a shake, Marion dear,” Annie said. “What ails you, when you don’t fancy bad news? Ah, yes, but it may be good news that comes in this way, and I know what would be the best to you.”

“Perhaps it is your brother Edward.” Marion’s lips were pale, and her voice shook, but still she tried hard to maintain an easy indifferent manner. “He may have heard of your father. Perhaps it is your father himself.”

“My father!” Annie had not thought of that. But no, how could he know they were here? — and Annie had made up her mind that Edward had no concern with the approaching guests.

"Yes," Marion continued, "why not him? it is more likely to be so, than anything I can think of."

"Ah, Marion dear, don't say so, your face and voice tell another story. Mother, mother! here's a carriage full of people coming up the road."

The old people were sitting in the parlour, enjoying a quiet talk by themselves in the gloaming—the presence of their guests had broken greatly in upon the early hours of the household—when it was too dim to work, and yet too light to have candles brought in, in country houses, at that time of year, often the pleasantest hour of all the day. The day had been very hot, the window where grew the great white rose of York was standing open, and the room was full of the odour of the sweet blossoms with which the tree was now laden. Mrs. Arnold was seated at another of the windows looking towards the river banks and the setting sun, and to it the girls had gone without entering the house. Annie had cried out to her own mother, but it was the mistress of Outchester who answered.

"Eh, hinny, folk coming here at this time o' night! Wha can they be, and what can folk want this gate? Francis, know ye ought of ony body should be on the road at this time?"

"No, I don't," was the answer; "mayhap somebody's mistook the road."

"Oh no, father. It's a post-chaise, and the driver wouldn't be likely to go wrong," Marion said.

"Besides," added Annie, "they, whoever they are, saw us and knew us, at least they began to wave their hats to us."

"Wha can it be, I wonder!" Mrs Arnold said. "Weel, weel, we'll sune see, ony way, but it passes my thought as to wha can be coming here."

Mrs. Arnold was soon out under the great tree, the place of reception of all coming guests at Outchester. She was accompanied by her husband and their guest, and joined by the two girls. The houses of the steading were wonderfully silent, the youngsters were either in bed or by the river side, and the hard working men who did not care about rustic feats had already followed the example of their younger children. So it came to pass

that there were few curious eyes watching the unusual arrival. Indeed the event — for event it was to the Outchester people — would have put a speedy stop to the games had it been known. The coach was quite near at hand now, and Marion was becoming still more agitated, though as yet she did not recognise the figure on the box quite perfectly. But they were all becoming aware of her agitation, and some of them becoming agitated too, as if by sympathy with her, and all having their attention on the rack to discover what this could mean. A loud hurrah from the energetic stranger on the front of the chaise, as it entered the gate of the green some hundred yards off, and came almost to a stop, which he took advantage of to leap down, excited them all to the highest pitch, and made Marion tremble yet more sensibly, and cling to Annie's arm with faster grip, — there was, she fancied, a name mingled with the hurrahs, and she began to recognise partly the form so long unseen, save in her dreams, and to discern, in the rapidly advancing figure, no other than Harry Grey.

“Don't ye know, don't ye remember me, Mrs. Arnold?” Harry cried, as he ad-

vanced rapidly towards the group under the great tree. "John is with me. There's good news for everybody else — is there not for me too?"

Harry was a little taken aback, because he was not instantly recognised; and there was Marion standing a little aside, clinging closely to that other girl whom he knew at once from John's description. What could be wrong that they — that she — did not spring forth to meet and welcome him? Nothing wrong, Harry, no slight is intended, but the surprise has been quite paralysing for a time, and this seeming coldness will be amply atoned for; see you not that Marion cannot speak, and that she can hardly stand, much less move? Once the first surprise is over, all will be as hearty as you can desire. Even now, as the coach draws up, and John and a stranger, who is greeted with quite as much surprise by Mrs. Archbold and her daughter as Harry has been, even now Mrs. Arnold finds her tongue.

"The Lord preserve us a', and it is really you, Harry Grey! I'd amaist as

sune have expected a visit frae Cheviot as see you the night. But guid save us, what's the matter wi' Mrs. Archbold? And you here, John! it's enough to drive onybody crazy. Will ye no tell what a' this means?"

Mrs. Archbold and Annie were clinging to the old Captain, weeping and laughing by turns, while Mr. Arnold was welcoming Harry. Marion had been startled out of a threatened swoon by the cry of Annie, and been able to recover herself, and was now utterly forgetful or careless of all the others for the moment. Harry was beside her, Harry was clasping her in his arms; no wonder she did not clearly perceive the other stranger, and had only the vaguest of all ideas about his being Annie Archbold's father. Mr. Johnson had seen the futility of hoping that he should ever gain Marion, and well for him, for the sight of that meeting would have dashed them all to the ground. John had to be interpreter to his father and mother of the strangeness of the arrival; and then, when the first exclamations of wonder, surprise, and plea-

sure were over, he was able to get them all shown into the parlour while he dismissed the coach; and as the others were fully engaged, his parents on hospitable cares, Mrs. Archbold with her husband, Marion with Harry, he betook himself to Annie's side, drew her, yet trembling and weeping little bursts of happy tears now and again, away to the garden to explain ostensibly how all this had come to pass, really to have his own little share in the love-making or love renewing of the time.

"Wasn't it the strangest fortune that I should meet your father so, darling?" he said. "I never was so much surprised all my life at anything as the double meeting."

"No wonder, for he was the most unlikely person for you to fall in with possible; but I need hardly ask, I can see almost all the rest. What did he say, John?"

"About what, my dearest? He said a great deal about various things."

"Of course, I know that; but you told about — about me; then, if you are so stu-

pid, I wouldn't have believed it of you, John."

John's answer seemed to be an acceptable one, though it was not expressed in words, and was followed, after a little, by "Now don't, John, or I'll run away."

"No, I won't let you. All your off-putting 'll not stand you in stead much longer, dearest, I'll hold you to your bargain, mind! I'll be off again to Grasaig in the morning to see about a house, and then hurrah for a new home and thee, Annie, my darling!"

"So you're going to leave us again all at once, are you?" Annie could not help being affected with the tone of John's speech, even though she tried to carry it off otherwise.

"Yes, darling," he answered, "for a little while only, that we may be the sooner together again, not to part more. You may guess by that that your father's pleased. I fancied that he did not half like at first my familiar speaking of Annie, the little girl he had left. Just fancy being asked if I knew a young man called Edward Archbold — doesn't it sound funny now?"

"A little, but how long have you known him? — hardly a year out, isn't it so?"

"I don't know, it seems to me a generation. But speaking of Ned, I hope he'll be here to-night, or to-morrow any way."

"How! Ned coming also. It's well that you have such confidence in Outchester; I wouldn't of course be surprised at anything the mistress purposed doing, and I daresay the old house is something like the fairy tent of old, which was big or little just as it was needed; but is it right to bring such shoals of people down upon your mother so unceremoniously?"

"Why not? Your people are my people, dearest Annie, and so my mother 'll think. As for the old place, oh, there's room here for a regiment of soldiers, at least so Harry Grey told the Captain."

"It's well to be well assured."

"Yes, Harry even entered upon the commissariat, told how there were sheep on the hills, and cattle in the stalls, and all what not, to assure your father that his coming would neither cause inconvenience nor a dearth."

"Well now, there's Betty looking for us; let us go in, John."

The party in the parlour had been re-united, and increased by the addition of Mr. Johnson, when they entered. The first burst of mutual inquiries and congratulations was over, the first eager questions had been answered. Harry Grey had not had a long interview with Marion, neither had they been many minutes alone, to his great discontent; for an absence like his ought, in his opinion, to have been rewarded on his return by a much longer and sweeter meeting than Marion and he had as yet had. But there was a good time coming for that, and there was a light in the eyes of both, which it did John's heart good to see. The like had perhaps never shone so clearly in Marion's eyes before. There was a calm, placid happiness and content in the countenances of the elderly people, once more united; the Archbolds felt that peaceful joy which so long had been a stranger to both, and all the sweeter, on one side, at least, because so unexpected, and the Arnolds, though their house had

been taken by storm as it were, so thoroughly sympathised with their guests, that they looked as happy as any, if not the happiest of the group, and Mrs. Arnold smiled, and yet wiped away a tear, when her son and Annie entered, and went up together to the weather-beaten veteran, who now had time to spare to notice her appearance, and even to joke with her on her daring in resolving to essay the world for herself.

"Do you think she is such a little girl, now, Sir?" John asked, after they had closed round the hospitable supper-table.

"Why now, I daresay I should have been as much astonished, and as likely to pass her by unrecognised, as Grey was you two days ago. She was a little lassie when I went away though. Did he tell you, Annie, how confounded he looked when he heard my name?"

"No, father, was he dismayed?" Annie asked slyly.

"Well, for the matter of that, I would not like to say. I don't think he was much dismayed, seeing that he was telling me boldly about you and your mother, and something else too, before an hour was

past. No, Grey, did you fancy our friend here was dismayed when he found me out the other morning?"

"It would be the first time in all his life if he was, Captain Archbold," Harry answered, "I can answer for that."

"What for should he be feared?" Mrs. Arnold interposed.

"Oh, nothing, mother, only Captain Archbold wants to have a joke about the way I looked when he asked me if I knew Edward."

"Ah, you stay-at-home people don't know what is it to meet one at whom they can ask such a question. The very name of the town Grasaig gave you an interest in my eyes. But what a singular fortune it was to meet—and the only person I had spoken to in London too—the very best man possible to tell me of all I cared for."

"It was truly a singular providence," Mr. Arnold said. "I'll no say John was not as blythe about it as ony could be. What a party we'd be now if our canty friend Edward were only here."

"Eh, bless him, that he were! Ay,

master, and our awn Frank too," Mrs. Arnold added. "But we'll ha'e him sune now, I reckon."

"Edward! why, he should be here now mostly; didn't I tell you I expected him, dear mother? I wrote to him to come if he could. Yes, I fancy Edward 'll come."

Mrs. Archbold looked excited a little, as if this was too much. Mrs. Arnold looked as angry as she could be at not having been told sooner. John added:

"He'll not be able to get here to-night though, and we've been all so occupied that it passed out of my head, mother."

"Ye're a' so full o' yer awn thoughts, you young folk, that it would be a real pleasure to me to see some one who could speak sensibly. But maybe that's a foolish notion, for I'd wager anything that the lad's head or heart's a wool-gathering too, as muckle as ony o' yours."

Mr. Johnson had hardly spoken; he sat silent and self-absorbed. Perhaps, though he had been daily becoming surer that he had not the shadow of a chance with Marion, the sight of her sitting so happily,

listening to the brown weather-beaten engineer, who had so much to tell her, that, Desdemona-like, she might have fallen still more deeply in love with him for his adventures' sake, though a painful was perhaps the best and surest cure. After worship, therefore, which Mr. Arnold, the head of the house, himself conducted this night, to the no small amazement of the sailor, who could and would have read prayers to his ship's company when there was no clergyman on board; but a private individual leading their devotions while one was in the room, and that in an extempore prayer too, wherein thanks were returned both for his own and Harry Grey's safety, quite passed his comprehension; and when they separated for the night, he went away with his wife with a much deeper feeling in regard to the head of the household than his homespun dress, homely manners, and broad pronunciation had at first inspired.



CHAPTER XIX.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

EDWARD did make his appearance at Outchester, and in a characteristic way. He had travelled most of the night in the mail, and been set down a little after day-break by a lonely inn on a road farther inland than Outchester, and distant some eight or nine miles. Of course, to an active, sanguine youth like Edward, there could be no thought of going to bed, and no need of hurrying across the country, for no one would be up for hours. It was a long walk; the way was not known to him until he came much nearer Fordham. Even if it had been known, he had no other thing for it but to walk on, however tired he might become. There's an old proverb, "Put a stout heart to a stiff brae;" and Edward had to do that both

figuratively and literally, the road across country seeming to prefer the hills to the level grounds. It is no joke travelling across a country with merely a vague direction to guide you, and not a soul to be seen for hours of whom you can ask the road. And such was Edward's case, toiling up hill and down, and blaming his recklessness and folly at not having secured a horse at least. The uncertainty was the great drawback. A pleasanter walk on a lovelier morning could hardly be conceived, for the fresh early summer was in all its glorious bravery, and the dew-drops were glistening like precious gems from every blade of grass and leaf, throwing out myriads of sparkles as the early sun darted down its far-searching rays. The hedges were gorgeous and odorous with the hawthorn, the dogrose and the honeysuckle, and the lowlier plants which clustered about the ditches and wayside. Nothing could be finer or pleasanter if time was no object; but when fatigue, and even hunger, began to tell, and the remembrance of the object of his journey recurred to him, Edward lost sight of the natural beauty of



the scene, and was fain to hail with pleasure the sight of smoke curling from a moss-grown cottage chimney, and to see signs of awakening life about the house as he drew near,

He was now fairly put on the road, and with brisker step he ascended the next hill. It was poor comfort to be told that he should have taken such a turn, or gone over such a height, and to learn that he was nearly as far from Outchester as ever. But he was now on the road, and from the hilltop, when he reached it, he could partly guess where he was, for this was surely the vale of Hetton Water which lay before him in all its summer beauty; a great contrast to what it was in those winter days when he had last seen it. However, once assured, Edward pressed on, and before any but the servants were astir he was at Outchester, being welcomed with a shout by Betty and her neighbour, and such a shout too as penetrated to various rooms in the old house, and made more than one of the sleepers arise. Before long John made his appearance, then Harry Grey, then the father; and Edward, footsore as he

had been a little while ago, felt, had he only a good bath, he would be himself again; and that also he obtained before the womenkind were visible, in one of the limpid pools of Hetton Water, under the trees.

Here were the whole of the two families united, save the one in Liverpool, of whom all these Outchester people knew was that he was very busy and very happy. This day of Edward's arrival, to be followed by the departure of himself and John, was a day of councils and consultations, of deciding on future courses of action among them all. John, with his clear head and keen perceptions, had already chalked out a course for himself simple and plain, and he had ideas about what was best for the others also, which, however, he must consult Annie about before he could or would submit them to the parties most concerned. Therefore, seeing Edward fully occupied with the old people, and resting himself after his long walk, while Harry Grey was away with Marion, making up for the lost time of the previous night, it is to be supposed, or discussing with her his or their fu-



ture prospects, John led Annie away down the river side, and there unfolded his plan to her as the one most interested in the same.

"I mean to do this, darling, always, if you approve," he said. "Mind, I have a right now to keep you at your word. Your father having come home, I'll not retract a bit from it, but hold you to your bargain within the month, you know, and a week is gone."

"Oh, John, don't be foolish now," Annie answered. "What need for all this hurry?"

"Much every way. First, I'll have to go to-morrow; then I'll never do good in Grasaig as long as you're here, and I wish to do work for your sake, darling. Besides, how'll it ever do for us to be separate? No, I'll go and get a house, and make ready as quick as I can, and then I'll come for you."

"But, John dear, we're not going to stay here. Father'll be going away, and he's sure to take us with him."

"Well, Annie dearest; but I don't think he'll do anything of the kind, just at once

any way, Wouldn't you like as well to be married here as anywhere? And we could go off at once to Grasaig, you know."

"Oh, John, really it is too bad of you."

"Is it, now, darling? I don't think so, for you know very well that till I have you back I'll be miserable; and you wouldn't like me to be miserable, would you, Annie? No, I know that. Now, why shouldn't we be married here? We'd be quieter and better, and then, when we left, you would go direct to your own home, my Annie."

Annie was more affected than she cared to show, but she pressed the hand which had hold of hers, and nestled more closely to his side, as if that was a good and sufficient answer. As such John accepted it.

"So, that settled, we'll get to the precise day by and by, dearest. Now, hear what I fancy will be best for your father. You would like them to be near us, dearest, wouldn't you?"

"Oh, yes, above everything."

"Well, then, I think I mentioned that Mr. Morton was commencing a new line of business; perhaps Captain Archbold's help would be important. It may be that

we could find something for him to do or to superintend there."

"Ah, John, do that; keep him from going back to sea again, and I'll do anything you please, anything you wish."

"Will you? Then you'll just be a good little girl in the meantime, and sit down on this seat beside me. I'll not tax you very much, unless it be to steal a week from the time. Well, darling, I feel almost certain I can manage that part as soon as I see Mr. Morton. Go back to sea your father must not again while Ned and I are so well to do, and with such prospects too."

"It will rejoice my poor mother's heart, for though she has been accustomed to it all her life, latterly she has felt it more than, at least, ever I mind of her having done; and then such a comfort to have them near——"

"Yes, my sweet one, I understand. Now Edward must go and take a house, and get it ready, and the old people can all stay together till we're prepared. Your father'll not weary; he can fish, or go about and see the country, or do many things; and as for you and Marion, I fancy

you'll have many things to do yourselves, won't you, dearest?"

John needed no answer. The quick sinking of the brilliant eyes as they met his, and the quick springing of the rich warm blood over the cheek, as he pressed her to his heart, answered him fully.

"But you won't be displeased if I send a helper to you, will you, love? What would you say to Ned's joe, Maggie. Poor girl, a visit to you here would do her good."

"Oh, I should like it above all things."

"She could be useful, perhaps, too; eh, Annie dear? But we must see now that you approve to the full of all my plans, mind of them all, in all their parts, we must see now what your father'll say to them too,"

Mr. Archbold would be pleased enough were it possible. Few shipmasters as old as he was but would greatly prefer giving up the sea, and something of the kind John thought of would suit admirably. Captain Archbold had ideas himself about vessels, their construction and fitting, which he might thus have a chance of bringing into notice. John shook his

head at that, however; these might be crotchets, not improvements. John did not think of how likely the greater part of inventors are of being considered crotchety at first, before their ideas have been fairly tried, and how very shortly since the same opinion might have been held of himself. About the settlement of the two families, the old one and its offshoot, John's new home, instant steps were to be taken, and till then Captain Archbold, unless he was needed elsewhere, was to remain at Outchester. The country, to one so intelligent as the old seaman, at that season would be delightfully refreshing; and he had been too much occasioned to life, in almost all its phases and conditions, to fear that it would be, for a little at least, too tame for his taste. Mrs. Archbold thanked John very gratefully for his idea, more as a mother might do a favourite son than a stranger, and well nigh roused his own mother's jealousy by the way in which she spoke to and treated him; while at the very time the good mistress of Outchester was petting and spoiling Edward to his own great delight and her content.

Harry Grey was the only one of the party who had come to no decision as to his future prospects. They seemed to point to London, or some southern town, and the charge there of work for the great company for whom he had done service under Captain Archbold. Harry felt almost indignant at John for having got everything in such fair trim and put out to sea while he was only preparing; but he would wait, must wait awhile, and in the meantime "Carpe diem" was his motto, and making up the lost time in his wooing his employment.

Thus John and his friend returned to Grasaig, full of big thoughts, and prompt to execute their resolutions. John's savings, up to this time not very considerable, and what he could draw from his father, must suffice for the small house he meant to take as his commencement in the world. A home to Annie must be as pretty a one as possible, so he sought about till he found, at the unfashionable end of the town, a pleasant cottage standing on the hillside, whence they could see the river and hills beyond, and be out of the bustle and noise

of the town, while not far from the place in which he was henceforth to labour so busily and unweariedly with brain and hands. Money and decision soon accomplish that on which the heart is set, and both were here under the governance of one strong will. True, there was more of energy than wealth; but there was enough of the latter for the purpose, and of the former sufficient to keep all the tradesmen in Grasaig at their wits' ends. Little wonder, therefore, that his small house was decked fit for the coming of its mistress, of his bride, his Annie, in fair good time; or that Edward, stimulated by his example, had set up the parental penates ready for the home coming of his parents.

Maggie Barnard was despatched to Northumberland, nothing loath either to go or to perform the duties there awaiting her. John wrote to Annie that it was wonderful to perceive how cosily Edward and she got on; still more, how readily and eagerly she agreed to go, and yet was so timid and fearful of the journey, even under the charge of Harry Grey,—who had been through inspecting things with a view of

reporting progress at Outchester, — that he had been tempted to label her as a bale of goods to be kept dry, and delivered with speed and care, lest she should altogether lose her reckoning. But, anyway, all went on as fairly and cheerily as they could desire, and the day so long looked for drew near when Annie Archbold was to surrender her name, give up her distinct identity as a free woman, and take her place among the matronhood of the land.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

SOCIETY in Grasaig had returned to its normal state. In its busy harbours and foundries, there was now little appearance of the state of matters which had existed only a few months ago. On the surface all things appeared as fair and flourishing as in the then state of the country could be expected. Much more so indeed, for the new enterprise which Mr. Morton had inaugurated had brought many men into the town, and there was a promise, such as had not been seen there for years, of employment in all the leading departments of Grasaig labour; for the new branch was specially calculated to help and increase the old. But beneath the surface there was an undercurrent, oil had been thrown on the waters, and there was a seeming

peace ; but still unseen the feeling abode, and there was jealousy and doubt existing, and suspected to exist, where before there had been confidence. Still the yards and foundries were full of busy men, and it was only those who looked more closely who could detect the undertow. Suspicion is frequently more hurtful than open enmity, and the farsighted both among the employers and the employed suspected and watched each other.

It was in such circumstances that John brought home his bride. Though he as clearly saw how long and patiently he would require to labour before confidence could be fully restored, he brought his Annie home in perfect trustfulness and triumph. There had been a great gathering at Outchester. Perhaps the old place had never seen such an assembly, not since the riding times at least. Mrs. Arnold scouted the idea of a quiet wedding for her son. On this point she was inflexible, and neither Annie nor John could shake her determination. She was the mistress, and in this would be obeyed.

“ May be it’s the last time, hinny,” she had

answered Annie. "My son 'll be clean awa' frae me now, and ye maun gi'e me my will in this. Beside a', wha ever heard o' the like o' you being marrit hidlins like, as if ye were either feared or ashamed. No, no, my darlin', gi'e me my awn way for this once, I'll no contrar ye again."

And her own way she had. Nor would she spare one blush of the bride, one quaint ceremony which was customary. The whole countryside of their own class was invited, and as the dissenters' marriage law was nearly a dead letter, and weddings celebrated either in Scotland, somewhat in Gretna Green fashion, or in the parish church, to the latter they must go with all the state and ceremony possible, Marion and Maggie Barnard attending the bride, while Frank and Edward and Harry Grey were ready to do anything in the way of waiting upon bride, or groom, or maids. Then there was a race home among the young farmers, keen enough horsemen at any time, but now very desirous of exhibiting their cattle and their skill. But it boots not to tell of feasting and rejoicings. The young couple managed to escape them



all, and get away alone, leaving the good Borderers to crack their jokes and amuse themselves under the charge of the substitutes they left behind them. John and his bride were snugly housed in Edinburgh ere Outchester was restored to its quiet, and they were quietly and in deep happiness looking out on the picturesque town, when the old place was ringing to the shouts which followed the giving of the last toast — “the prosperity of the young couple” — for something like the twentieth time.

The following evening they arrived in Grasaig, and took possession of their pretty little house; Annie was delighted with it, and well she might be, but much more was she delighted with the way in which John installed her as its mistress.

“God bless you, dearest,” he said, when he had placed her in a handsome easy chair, as if it were to be henceforth her throne; “God bless you evermore, my darling, and your home!”

Frank is still zealously pursuing his studies, and the future is opening to him full of promise in the path he has been led to choose. In his profession he can never become a wealthy man, and to many it seems the very extremity of folly for him to have thrown away so many years acquiring a new profession. It ever will appear so to the multitude, when they see a man give up all for God's cause; all who look on the church as a mere respectable profession, on a par so far with the other professions, will be ever apt to judge thus. Those who look on it in a higher point of view will think more favourably of the self-denying man who begins a new life, and seeks, not for lucre's sake, to fit himself for benefiting his fellows by such a course of self-denial. Not that Frank's course was one altogether of self-denial; no, there was much of true pleasure both in the study and work itself; and then, though no word was spoken, there seemed a perfect understanding, as there ever had been an unrestrained intercourse, with Mary Cuthbert and her family. By and by, when Frank has become settled in the church,

there may be another great day at Outchester, in which Mary's name will be the chief one.

Marion is settled in the south of England. Harry is superintending engineer for a great steamship company, and prospering daily. Marion is hardly so much countrified as she was, yet there is very little difference; she is as purely simple in her manners and feelings as ever, and as thoroughly practical. Her greatest pleasure, from year to year, is the summer jaunt to Outchester, where the two families meet, and Annie and herself can interchange maternal experiences, and introduce to each other various new scions of the old stock. Quite a little army of Annies and Franks and Harries and Marions are springing up around the parent roots; and the mistress—with such plenty of subjects to be spoiled, who like it so much too—begins to lose count of them, and can sometimes hardly tell the difference between, it may be, two Annies or three Franks;



for Edward and Maggie's bairns are almost as much at home on Hetton side as the children proper of the house.

John and Edward are both prosperous men. Their early efforts were only the first promise of what has come to pass, and improvement after improvement has been effected by them, till they have become famous as well, and have helped, as much perhaps as any one of the host of Scottish engineers, to raise the name of Clyde ships and Clyde engines to the great height on which they stand. Yet now, with their great houses and their great names, consulted by governments far and near, and more than consulted, seeing their advice followed, there is perhaps nothing either of them so much enjoys as to run away for a day or two to Outchester. It is a joy to Mrs. Arnold, greater than she can express, to go into the old meeting leaning on the strong arm of her son the great engineer, and perhaps the old man feels no less pleasure and pride when he follows with the blooming matron into whom Annie has changed, or leads the little troop of grandchildren to the place where their father



prayed. Mr. Johnson is still a bachelor ; it is years since he got possession, by the death of Mr. Fraser, of the Manse, which the aid of his friends has remodelled and rebuilt ; but Mrs. Arnold whispers that he visits very often—so often, the folk say, that his pony knows the way of itself—a certain family where there is more than one daughter, and report has already fixed on one of them for him. Time is falling gently on the old people, and the prosperity of the young has flowed on them also. Outchester is no longer held as tenant. Mr. Arnold is its proprietor now ; and it really is, and seems the true seat of the families which there so often assemble, and its traditions are becoming part of the knowledge which the youngsters first and most eagerly acquire, Red Rowly's Seat is Annie's bower to John himself, but to no one else, nor can he succeed in all his efforts to change the name.

"It's no use, John, the bairns know the legend," Mrs. Annie says to him.

"Well, I must give it up, my dear, I suppose ; but you mind when I said it would ever be to me Annie's bower ; what



a long time ago it is, to be sure, and Annie's bower it shall remain, call it you and the bairns what you will."

For John was quite as much in love with Annie now as in those old days when they sat here so lovingly together, and likes quite as well to sit in the same fashion as he did then.

THE END.

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